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ABSTRACT

This guide was designed to provide students with information on choosing a career and finding a job. Chapter 1 discusses the importance of self-understanding in career choice, job change, and the improvement of job performance; explores methods of self-evaluation and self-development; and lists pertinent resources. Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of investigating careers, explaining how to gather and evaluate career information, how to prepare for and conduct information-gathering interviews, and ways to obtain necessary training. The steps involved in making a career decision are identified in Chapter 3 as defining the problem, gathering information, generating alternatives, evaluating and eliminating alternatives, making an action plan, and evaluating the career decision. Chapter 4 discusses job hunting in terms of locating job openings and preparing resumes and cover letters. Chapter 5 helps students prepare for interviews and offers guidelines for writing thank you letters, deciding among offers, and writing letters of acceptance or rejection. Chapter 6 presents suggestions for getting along on the job, considering common mistakes made in a new job, characteristics of successful employees, relationships with co-workers, and good work habits. Examples of self-inventories, resumes and cover letters, and a list of negative factors in job interviews are included. (DAB)

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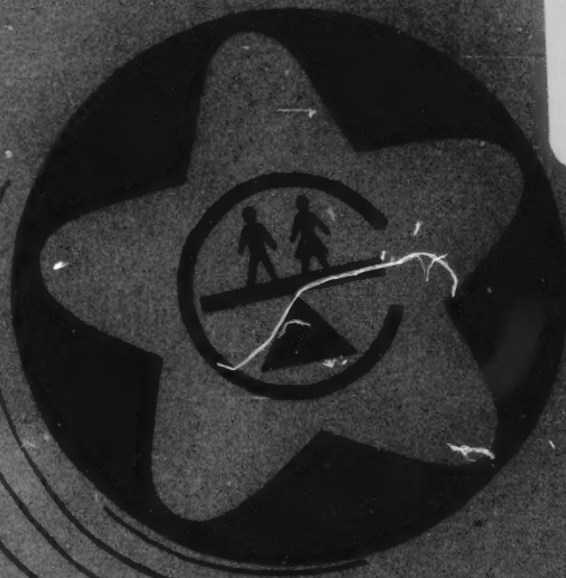
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A
**GUIDE
FOR
IMPROVING
YOUR POSITION**

DALLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION

Advance: A Guide For Improving Your Position

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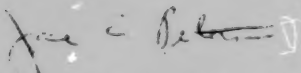
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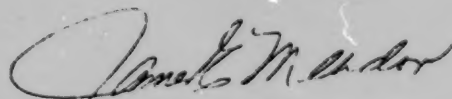
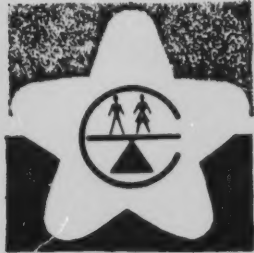

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Chapter I



Understanding Yourself

Do you hope to select a career that will be rewarding for you? Are you thinking of changing jobs in the near future? Are you concerned about improving your performance on your current job? As a co-op student, your answer to at least one of these questions is probably YES. If it is, then you need to invest some time in learning about yourself. Even if you feel that you already know enough about yourself, you can benefit from an objective and current inventory of your values, skills, interests, aptitudes, and personal qualities.

Why Do I Need To Know More About Myself To Choose A Career?

That question can best be answered with another question. How are you going to make a wise decision--choose a rewarding career--unless you know what makes you "feel rewarded"? To know that, you **must** know

yourself well. Consequently, taking time to think systematically about several aspects of your life is the first step in the career-decision process.

Why Do I Need To Know More About Myself To Change Jobs?

The main reason you need to know more about yourself to land a different job is that at every step in the employment-seeking process, you must be able to state your strengths clearly. To state those strengths clearly, you must first know what they are, so some self evaluation is necessary. Since today's job market is competitive, you must take a knowledgeable, active, and realistic approach to the job-hunting process. In order to do that, you need to know as much as possible about your interests, abilities, values, and goals so you can relate them to the position you are seeking. Think of it simply as knowing what you have to offer an employer. After all, it is up to you to present yourself in the best light possible. Employers want to know what you can do for them that another applicant cannot do.

Opportunities to promote yourself as the best applicant occur at every step in the process, from your resume and cover letter (which should highlight your strengths) through the interview. Although the detailed information on interviews and preparing

resumes and various letters appears later in this book, you need to realize now that when you are seeking a job, you are likely to be asked questions such as "Tell me about yourself" or "Why should we hire you?" or "What qualifications do you possess that make you feel you would be successful at this job?" or "What is your major weakness?" If you are thinking about these questions for the first time when you are sitting in front of the interviewer, your answers will reflect your lack of preparation and may cost you the job.

Why Do I Need To Know More About Myself To Improve My Current Job Performance?

The answer to this question is easy: you cannot improve and be aware of your improvements without knowing how you have been performing. For instance, you cannot be certain you have improved the gas mileage on your car by changing to radial tires unless you know what the mileage was before you put on the new tires. If you are concerned about improving on your job, you need to begin with an objective, current inventory of your performance and the skills, aptitudes, values, and personal qualities involved in that performance. For this purpose, you may need an evaluation or self inventory that is somewhat different from that of the job seeker, but your co-op

instructor can help you determine what type of self evaluation will be most beneficial to you.

How Can I Learn More About Myself?

If you are now convinced of both the value and purpose of learning more about yourself, then the question of how to learn more should seem logical to you. Essentially there are five methods for learning more about yourself:

SELF INVENTORIES

FORMAL ASSESSMENTS (Personality, Interest, etc.)

OTHERS' COMMENTS (Written or Spoken)

OTHERS' REACTIONS

SELF OBSERVATION

Because each method offers different advantages, you need to be aware of all of them so you can select the method or methods most valuable for you.

USING SELF INVENTORIES

A self inventory is usually a chart you fill in or a **list** you check (see Appendix A for examples). The purpose of a self inventory is to provide you with a "fresh look" at yourself. The idea is to examine all aspects of your life and experience to determine what your interests, values, aptitudes, skills, and goals are. One self inventory may ask you to list your **INTERESTS** under various categories such as leisure

activities (past and present hobbies etc.), employment (parts of jobs you have especially enjoyed), home and family (personal responsibilities you really like), education (courses and activities you have enjoyed), and social activities (civic or church work that interests you or friendships). Some interest inventories might even ask you to include either childhood or current fantasies about jobs.

Other self inventories, especially aptitude and skills inventories, are very similar to interest inventories because you are asked to list your ideas under various categories. For example, on an APTITUDE inventory you might be asked to list tasks that come easily or "naturally" to you such as interpersonal relationships, repairing small appliances, problem solving, organizing things or people, and so on. On a SKILLS inventory, you might be asked to consider and list skills not only from current or previous jobs but from hobbies, family responsibilities, church or social activities, courses you have taken, and so on.

Another type of self inventory is the WORK VALUES inventory. This usually consists of a list of different aspects of work that people may value such as job security, variety, prestige, or independence. You are asked to indicate which values are important to you and then rank those in importance.

Despite differences in specific self inventories, all self inventories are designed to help you assess yourself by considering all aspects of your life. The result of a thorough self inventory should be a fresh look at yourself. One major advantage of a "whole self" picture is that it frees your thinking about your options. Instead of thinking about future job opportunities only in terms of past work experience or education, you can think of possibilities in terms of your "whole self". With a new look at yourself, you might even want to investigate a different career field. In addition, doing a self inventory can make a final career or specific job decision easier because you will have already clarified your work values. If, after you have completed this chapter, you want more information on the self inventories available, look at the bibliography at the back of this book and talk to your instructor-coordinator.

USING FORMAL ASSESSMENTS

The method of using formal assessments is somewhat more structured than self inventories because this method involves taking one or more standardized interest, aptitude, or personality inventories. Some of the more common ones include personality tests such as the Edwards or the Sixteen Personality Factors, interest tests such as the Self Directed

Search or the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, ability tests such as the Personal Skills Map or the General Aptitude Battery, and values tests such as Super's Work Values Inventory. If you are interested in this method, a campus counselor or your co-op instructor can help you determine which assessments (if any) would be appropriate for you and see that you have assistance with interpreting your scores.

USING OTHERS' COMMENTS

The method of using others' comments is rather informal but difficult. It requires that you actually listen to others' comments about your skills, attitudes, aptitudes, and ideas. These comments may come from friends, co-workers, family members, supervisors, or even strangers. The more often a variation on a comment occurs, the more reliable the comment. For instance, if friends regularly comment on or joke about your promptness or your lateness, you know you have an asset or a weakness. Similarly, if you are known in your family and at work as "the peacemaker" or "the hot head", you have identified skills and aptitudes or an area for improvement. If strangers regularly comment on not being able to understand you or ask you to repeat what you've stated, you may recognize a communication problem which needs investigating (is it caused by the speed

of your speech, by your soft voice, by mumbling?). Since such comments are common, you may hear them without thinking about their implications. Do a mental inventory of the comments you can remember. Then, spend a week both listening to what others say and thinking about the implications of their comments.

Written comments also fall within this category. The most common are your supervisor's comments on your job evaluation form and the comments your references make in the letters of recommendation you ask them to write. Unlike the verbal comments, you probably do think about the written comments, especially the ones you consider negative. In evaluating written comments about you, it is very important to try to be objective. If your supervisor makes a negative comment, try to determine what behaviors led the supervisor to that impression and what is necessary to change that impression. If after careful and objective consideration (i.e. checking out the reactions or impressions of others in a position to know), you feel a comment is not deserved or is based on misinformation, you must recognize that you have uncovered a communication or image problem. When this occurs, it is more important to invest energy in determining the

causes and possible solutions than in attacking the supervisor.

WATCHING OTHERS' REACTIONS

Another method of learning more about yourself is to watch others' reactions to you. Some basic information on body language might be helpful to you, but common sense can help enormously. If your co-workers seek your suggestions and often are successful in using them, then you might be more of a problem solver than you had realized and/or more of a natural leader than you recognized. If that situation exists but you do not do well when your supervisor evaluates you, then you may have a problem with "marketing" yourself or being assertive (getting the credit for your ideas). Similarly, if you regularly get negative reactions from co-workers, you need to examine the cause. If people regularly become angry and defensive when you ask them to perform tasks which you have a right to request, then you may have a communication problem. To make an effective tool of watching others' reactions, you must learn to look for patterns of behavior-- what actually happens, not what is said. If you are uncertain whether reactions you get on the job are significant or you are uncertain about what they may mean, then

you would **be** wise to discuss the situation with a neutral **expert**--your co-op instructor.

SELF OBSERVATION

The final method of learning more about yourself is listening to and observing yourself. This relates directly to the previous two methods. You do need to listen to yourself, and though that may sound **stupid**, it really isn't. Each of us **has** habits of speech and manner which we are unaware of simply because we are always present to hear ourselves. So, **tape** an informal conversation for an hour (just long enough to forget that the tape is running) and then listen to it. Hearing yourself should make you aware of **several** speech habits. Although identifying **such** habits may be helpful, the real value in such an **exercise** is discovering that you do not listen to yourself. Once you realize that, you can begin listening to yourself. For instance, you may find out that when you "ask" someone to perform a task for you, in reality you are commanding in a very loud voice. It may be your manner and not the work you request that gets the **negative** response. Once you know what your manner is, you can take steps to change so that you receive the results you want.

When you combine listening to yourself with observing yourself, you can really isolate possible

sources of your successes and weaknesses. For instance, by listening to yourself you might discover that you really do request work in a reasonable manner as far as your words are concerned. However, by watching yourself you might find that your behavior creates the negative reaction. Perhaps you are a "shover" and simply had never realized that you nearly throw work at others or nearly knock them down. On the other hand, you might discover that your successful relations with co-workers may be partly due to the fact that you are courteous in behavior (i.e. give them adequate physical space, don't blow smoke in others' faces, etc.). A combination of observing and listening to yourself is particularly important because the information you can gather with it is often information you can get no other way.

People react to each other positively and negatively, but often they do not understand themselves what it is they are reacting to. When people don't understand, they can't communicate what is bothering them. So, it is up to you to determine what you are doing to create positive and negative reactions. A periodic, thorough self-evaluation provides you with a valuable tool. It's not a sign of being self-centered, but it is a sign of being smart. The information you gain from a self evaluation will benefit you when you are trying to make an important decision,

when you are seeking a job, and when you are working in the job you have chosen.

If I Have Identified Areas I Want To Develop Or Improve,
How Can I Begin?

Almost any thorough self inventory is going to result in wanting to make changes. You may want to improve an area you consider a weakness or you may want to develop further one of your strengths. The most important points here are to concentrate on only one area at a time and to choose an area over which you do have control. Even though you cannot change the color of your eyes or increase your height, you do have control over yourself in most areas. You can change most things about yourself. However, you cannot directly change others. If you want to improve your relationship with a supervisor, you must focus on changing your own behavior. Even though the other person's behavior may change in response to your changes, you cannot directly change another person's behavior.

Once you have identified your own areas for improvement or development, you have several basic steps to follow:

Step 1. Assess The Situation

This step means identifying the base line-- what kind of "mileage" are you getting before you try to improve? For instance, if you have

decided to improve the way you request work from others, you will need to spend a week listening to yourself and noting (mentally first and in writing later) each time you request work and your manner (demand, question, etc). Notice that this assessment also serves as a doublecheck: it will indicate whether you really have the problem that you think you have.

Step 2. Divide The Problem Into Its Parts

This step means identifying the situations when you are already doing the desired behavior and those when you are not. For example, you may find that you already make requests effectively when you are dealing with superiors or when you are not feeling rushed. You must also identify different aspects of the problem. For instance, do you have one problem with phrasing your requests and another with the tone of voice you use?

Step 3. Generate Possible Solutions

This step will probably be quite difficult. If you are like most people, you probably find it much easier to think up possible solutions to other people's problems than to your own. Fortunately, your co-op instructor can help you generate ideas for this step. In the case of improving verbal requests, you might think of several plans to try such as counting to five before making any work request or jotting down the most important requests before saying them. (If this isn't your problem, you have probably already thought of several other good possible solutions.) When you have thought of several plans that might solve your problem, you need to decide which one you will try first. At this step you also need to rank any two-sided problems. For example, if you have trouble making requests, you must decide whether to concentrate first on phrasing or first on the tone of your voice.

Step 4. Set Goals

This step is a bit easier. You may want to refer to the list of action verbs you used in making your learning objectives for this course. Your goals here, like your learning objectives, must be specific, measurable, and realistic. Just as "Becoming an expert in computers" would not work as a learning objective, so "Making

effective requests" will not work as a goal. If you already know that in only one of twenty times do you "ask" instead of demand, then you might set a goal like this: I will increase my use of questions for requests by using phrases such as "Can you...", "Could you...", "Would you...", so that in six weeks I will be using such phrases in sixteen of every twenty request situations. You probably should not demand perfection (twenty out of twenty) for yourself, and you should not demand almost instant results (there will not be a "new you" in two days or a week). When you have a specific, measurable, and realistic goal, you need to set up a time table. Here is a sample of a time table:

By the end of:	I will use question phrases in:
1st week	3 of 20 requests
2nd week	5 of 20 requests
3rd week	8 of 20 requests
4th week	11 of 20 requests
5th week	14 of 20 requests
6th week	GOAL ACHIEVED (16 of 20)

Step 5. Establish Rewards

This step is easy and fun. You only need to remember two rules. First keep your reward proportionate to the importance of the area you are developing. Second, be certain that the rewards do not have any negative aspects (rewarding yourself by buying yourself what you cannot afford or by "taking off a bit early" may create problems more serious than the one you are working to solve). You can build both short term and long term rewards into your "contract" with yourself and you can build in "punishments" if you wish. Your co-op instructor can help you determine the kind of self-management contract that will best suit your personality, situation, and problem.

Step 6. Record Your Progress

Before you begin your self-development contract, you need to design some type of chart that will enable you to quickly record your progress. Your problem and situation will suggest how frequently you need to record your behavior (perhaps four times a day, perhaps only once a day, or even once a week). Again, your co-op instructor can help you determine what best fits your needs.

Step 7. Modify Your Plan As Needed

This step may or may not be necessary. Give yourself time to try the plan before you decide it is not working. Do not immediately reject your plan just because others do not seem to notice or because others make negative comments about your new behavior. Before beginning a self-management contract, you should realize that many people may feel uncomfortable with changes in those around them and some may question your motives at first. If, after giving your plan a fair trial, you find either that you cannot carry it out or that it is producing more negative results than positive ones, you can discuss it with your co-op instructor. Together, you can probably sort the situation out to determine whether you misdiagnosed the problem in the first place or whether your success in completing this plan cannot occur until you have improved or developed in another area.

What Resources Are Available To Help Me In This General Area of Self-Evaluation and Self-Development?

As a co-op student, you have many resources available to you. Your co-op instructor has expertise as well as materials available to you. In addition to this direct resource, other types of resources are available, and your instructor-coordinator can help you select those that will be most beneficial for you.

CAREER TESTING AND COUNSELING CENTERS

These resources provide testing and self-inventory information as well as help you interpret results. They can also provide information on career opportunities in various fields and information on job-seeking skills. They fall into two broad categories: free services and paid services. The most important free services are available through your campus co-operative education office, the campus placement office, the campus counseling center, and the state employment office. Of course, you can pay for the same services by looking in the Yellow Pages

for private career counseling centers, testing centers, and/or employment agencies.

COURSES

Almost every aspect of self-evaluation and self-development is offered through courses. You may take college credit courses, such as human development courses (there is one specifically for career exploration, one for leadership, and several for interpersonal relations), psychology courses, speech and communication courses, management courses, and so on. Many of the same kinds of courses are offered without college credit through the continuing education programs of colleges, high schools, churches, and other service organizations. In addition, companies frequently offer training in special areas (such as improving your direction-giving abilities) through in-service seminars, meetings, and work-shops.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

There are hundreds, perhaps even thousands of books on evaluating yourself, improving yourself in **specific** areas, and choosing careers. The bibliography at the end of this book will get you started. Both public and college libraries can provide you with more information than you could ever hope to use.

FILMS, FILMSTRIPS, TAPES, ETC.

Your co-op instructor can arrange for you to view or listen to material on many of these subjects. In **addition**, your company may have a film library you can use.

If you feel comfortable with your grasp of self-evaluation and self-development and you have all the information you need now, discuss with your instructor what other sections of this book you should complete. If you need additional information on self-evaluation or self-development, talk to your co-op instructor or a campus counselor.

Chapter 2



Learning About Careers

After you have "researched yourself" and identified your aptitudes, interests, skills, values, and personal qualities, you need to invest time in researching career options. You are in a good position to do this because your up-to-date self-inventory provides a context for evaluating possible occupations. If you already have a career goal in mind, you still need to gather information about that field or job. What you learn in the process will prepare you for job-seeking later and will either reaffirm the wisdom of your choice or alert you to potential problems and options for solving them.

Why Is It Important To Investigate Career Options?

There are three major reasons for researching careers. The most important reason is to become

aware of the options available. Most of us have relatively limited knowledge about career fields in general and specific jobs in particular. However, the bottom line is that you cannot choose a job for a career goal if you don't know that job exists. The second reason is that information about careers is necessary if you want to set realistic goals for yourself. The amount of time and money that must be invested in preparing for careers varies tremendously. The third reason is that investigating careers makes you an informed seeker of employment who knows salary ranges, opportunities for advancement, educational requirements, typical working conditions, anticipated job openings, and other relevant data. Understanding the current profile of a specific job and the projections for that position five, ten, or twenty years from now gives you a more realistic basis for making a decision.

How Can I Obtain This Information?

Since we live in an "information explosion era", your greatest problem will be selecting which information to examine. You should probably begin by giving yourself an overview of the kinds of career fields and the variety of written materials available. The best way to do this is to go to a library and look

in the subject card index for "Careers" or "Occupations". DO NOT WRITE YOURSELF ANY NOTES OR CHECK OUT ANY BOOKS--JUST LOOK. The purpose here is to give yourself an idea of the number and variety of books available as well as the number of career fields. Hopefully, as you look you will find yourself thinking "I never heard of that field before" or "I never thought of that as a career area."

Your next step should be examining the most recent editions of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, the Occupational Outlook Handbook and possibly the Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance (2 volumes). Your first encounters with these valuable references should be browsing and skimming only. You need to see the kinds of information each contains and understand the way each is organized. There is one other source you might want to look at before you conclude your "browsing" and that is the Occupational Outlook Quarterly, a periodical published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Labor. The Occupational Outlook Quarterly focuses on job trends and new jobs that are emerging because of technological change.

Once you have given yourself an overview--looked at the "big picture" with all the possibilities in it--you need to select two or three career fields or

areas to examine in depth. To select the areas for in-depth research, you should review the information you gathered about yourself in chapter one. Then **ask** yourself a series of questions: What are my work values? What interests, skills, aptitudes, and personal qualities do I now possess? What needs do I hope to satisfy with a career? What areas use my assets and can satisfy those needs?

When you have selected two or three fields to investigate, you are ready to read about each field and to take notes on specific jobs that look promising. You will probably want to begin with the Occupational Outlook Handbook and the Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance because the information there is more condensed than in books devoted to single fields. If, after reading these sources carefully, you still feel that a given field holds promise for you, then check out one or two books on that field. At this point, too, you might want to check with your co-op instructor or the campus co-op director to see what pamphlets or brochures may be available on fields or specific jobs that interest you.

Be thinking as you are reading. The more you know about a specific job, the better able you will be to determine whether it is likely to suit you.

To keep your mind active as you read, ask yourself questions like these: What skills does this work require? What kinds of personality traits and aptitudes are necessary or desirable? Where would it lead? What kind of education or training is needed? If I had the required training, could I handle the job comfortably? How would I feel in that position? What things about it would I dislike? What would I especially like? What parts of the job could I do well? What aspects might be too difficult for me?¹ Keeping these questions in mind will help you evaluate the job in terms of you as a person. However, while you are reading, you also need to be evaluating the information to determine its value as information.

How Should I Evaluate The Information I Read?

The amount of information available on careers is tremendous, but all of it is not equally valuable. You need to be able to distinguish between the good (thorough and accurate) information and the mediocre or poor information. To judge the value of what you are reading, you need to consider several facts. First, consider the date it was written. Since job-related information changes regularly, more recent information is better. Second, determine how the

information was collected. Does it represent the first-hand experience of one or two individuals or the observations made by one or two? Or is the information all second-hand, gathered from other books? Has the information been gathered from surveys? If so, who were the participants and how were they selected?

Third, consider the author and his or her purpose. Does the writer have experience in the field or not? Is the purpose of the book, chapter, or article to recruit applicants for the field? If so, you must realize that the negative aspects of the work will be brushed over or ignored. A positive or "pro" bias is most common in brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters published by individual companies, by trade and professional associations, and by educational institutions. The title often betrays the "pro" bias, so if you encounter something like "Have You Considered a Rewarding Career in the Health Professions?", take what you read with the proverbial "grain of salt". Fourth, review the kinds of information included. In general, the more specific the information, the better.

No one publication is likely to contain all the information you want, but the amount of detailed information is probably an index of the value of the

source. Here are the pieces of information that the National Vocational Guidance Association feels should be included in a thorough occupational description:²

- *Definition of the occupation
- *History of the occupation
- *Nature of the work, including duties performed, tools and equipment that are required, possible work settings, and fields of specialization
- *Requirements: education and training, aptitudes, temperament, interests, physical capacity, and working conditions
- *Special Requirements: certification or licensing required by law, as for teachers and electricians
- *Methods of entering the occupation: direct application, personal reference, exam, apprenticeship
- *Opportunities to explore the occupation through summer or part-time employment
- *Usual lines of advancement or possibilities of transferring to a related occupation: seniority, in-service training, additional education
- *Employment outlook: what predictions can be made about the future for people trained in this occupation?
- *Income: special considerations like overtime, seasonal fluctuation, tips, fringe benefits. How much can a beginner expect? What do most people (not just the top-earners in the field) in this occupation earn?
- *Working conditions, including hours, physical setting, hazards
- *Social and psychological factors: work satisfaction, patterns of relationships with supervisors, unions, and so forth

*Sources of additional information such as trade associations, pamphlets, and journals

After you have gathered factual information about each field or position you are interested in, you are ready to seek other kinds of information. For example, how individuals feel about their jobs is not usually included in books or brochures. One exception is Studs Terkel's book, Working, which contains the answers given by hundreds of people to questions of how they felt about their jobs and what they liked and disliked. Another exception is the series entitled Vocational Biographies. Each book in the series covers a different occupation and includes comments on how people feel about their jobs. Even though books such as Working or Vocational Biographies can help you get a different perspective on a job, there is an even better way of gaining a different perspective--you can arrange information-gathering interviews with people in positions that interest you.

What Is An Information-Gathering Interview?

An information-gathering interview is a scheduled conversation between you and someone who is already doing what you think you would like to be doing. Everyone knows that valuable information can be gotten from the horse's mouth....or the doctor's mouth or the travel agent's or manager's or engineer's.

And that well-known concept is what underlies the information-gathering interview. Since you are the one who will be arranging these interviews, you have the balance of control during the interview. You should use that control to focus the spotlight on the other person's expertise and experience. Through talking with people in the field, you can learn what you may not be able to learn from books.

Why Are Information-Gathering Interviews Important?

Part of the value lies in the first-hand experience of observing the work situation and listening to accounts of what a job involves and how other individuals feel about the job. In a sense, the information-gathering interview can be a reality check on what you have read and thought about a job. In addition, the people you interview can provide you with information that is more up-to-date and more relevant to the local situation than the information available in most written material. Another very important part of the value relates to the role of the information-gathering interview in the job-hunting process. When you are actively seeking a job, you will be going to employment interviews. Even though the information-gathering interview has a different purpose from the employment interview,

the experience you gain in information interviews can increase your self-confidence so that you will be more comfortable in employment interviews. Finally, when you schedule information-gathering interviews, you are developing a network of expert contacts you can call upon later.

How To Find People To Interview

Once you know the kinds of people you want to interview (what jobs they have in what kinds of organizations), then you need to start asking the people you know if they know anyone in that particular job. You can begin by checking with your friends, family, co-workers, instructors, and neighbors, as well as with the campus co-op, placement, and career-planning offices. Whenever someone mentions a name, ask for the correct spelling of the name, the proper pronunciation, the person's title and company affiliation, and, if possible, the phone number. Also, remember to ask each person who gives you a name if you can use his or her name when you make the initial contact. If you do not get three or four names from asking people you know, then you can call community service organizations (such as a Rotary Club or Chamber of Commerce) or a trade or professional association or union. (If you want to find out about

associations, look at the Encyclopedia of Associations in the library.) These organizations and associations will usually provide names of members who might be willing to talk with you.

How To Arrange The Interview

Begin by reminding yourself that people are generally interested in talking about what they do and how they do it. If you are straightforward with the people you contact and you make your motive clear, most will be willing to cooperate with you. The most effective way to schedule an interview is with a telephone call. Here are some examples of how to make the contact:³

Calling When You Have A Personal Referral

Assume that you have discovered that your neighbor, Pat Brooks, knows someone you would like to interview. Your opening remarks should be direct.

"Hello, my name is _____. Pat Brooks suggested that I call you. I am considering a career in _____ and would be interested in any information you could share with me. Would you be willing to see me for about 30 minutes to talk about your work?"

Calling When You Have No Referral

Assume that you have selected the name of an owner of a small business from a Yellow Pages ad.

"Ms. Robinson, I'm _____, a student at Richland College. I am very interested in a career in industrial landscape design, but

I have not found very much specific information about it that relates to this region. I understand that you have been involved in this field for some time, and I would be very interested in your perspective about careers in commercial landscape design. Would you be willing to see me for about 30 minutes some time next week?"

There are two other approaches you may try, but each has disadvantages. If you do have a personal referral, you could write a letter saying, essentially, what the first phone call says. In your letter, indicate that you will telephone to arrange the specific appointment. (You cannot expect the potential interviewee to spend time writing to you.) The primary disadvantage to the letter is that it requires more time of you and of the other person, and it is not usually received as well as a phone call. The last approach is to walk in or drop in and introduce yourself and state your purpose much as you would with a phone call. There are two possible disadvantages to this: one is that you may spend hours waiting to see someone and the other is that you may give the impression of being a poor planner. How appropriate the walk-in or drop-in approach is depends on the position of the person you want to interview. If you are considering a career as a fire-fighter, dropping in at the nearest fire station is probably a very good idea. However, if you are considering a career as an air traffic controller, the drop-in approach is probably a very bad idea.

How To Prepare For The Interview

Regardless of your approach for arranging information-gathering interviews, you need to be prepared when you walk into the interview. You should review the information you have acquired from written sources and know exactly what information you want from each person you interview. You should have four or five questions in mind for each person you interview. You may have these written out, but do not make the other person feel you are conducting an inquisition. When you are selecting questions, keep asking yourself whether the question you are considering could be considered offensive. Here are questions to stimulate your thinking. Remember, the idea is to seek information that is not readily available elsewhere but is important to you.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS ⁴

Pick out four or five questions for the information-gathering interview. The idea is to ask about those things that are important to you.

How did you get into this work? or How did you get started on this job?

How did you prepare yourself for this job or profession?

What classes or projects can prepare me for this career area? or What were the most valuable things you learned in college?

Knowing what you know now, would you take this same job again? Why? or Why not?

What do you like most about your job? or What do you find most rewarding about your work?

What do you like least about your job?

What skills or personal qualities are necessary in this career?

What do you do in a typical day?

What type of people do you work with?

What are other specialities in this career area? (Get referrals if appropriate)

Would you advise young adults (or middle-aged people) to enter this field? Why? or Why not?

What, in your opinion, is the job outlook in this career area?

What will affect its growth or decline?

In what other settings or industries do (engineers, florists, etc.) work? (Get referrals if possible)

How To Follow-Up The Interview

When you leave the interview, make a few notes to yourself. These notes may be impressions you had of the work place or the person, or they may be specific pieces of information you gained. Within a day or two, write a short thank-you letter to the person who saw you. You should begin by thanking her or him for the time spent with you on the particular day you met. Mention one or two pieces of information or topics of conversation that were particularly interesting or helpful to you. Your last paragraph should be a single statement again expressing appreciation

for the cooperation.

You may wish to look at the sample thank you letters in chapter five (see pages 99 and 100). Even though those letters are designed to follow up an employment interview, the structure and major points are the same for following up an information-gathering interview. Your letter may be handwritten or typed. If it is handwritten, it should be neat and legible as well as correct. The primary purpose of this letter is to demonstrate your courtesy so that the contact you have made will have a favorable impression of you. Then, if you need to call the contact at a later time for more information, the contact will be much more likely to remember you and be willing to assist you.

How To Obtain Any Necessary Training

As you read through available information on jobs and talk to people in the field, you will be gathering information on the education, training, and skills necessary for the positions you are considering. How you can obtain the necessary background will vary depending on the position. For instance, some jobs require very specific certification or college degrees while others simply require that you can demonstrate you have skills or information without caring how you

acquired that knowledge. Since there is such diversity, you need to be aware of the most common approaches to gaining needed information or skills.

The approach of taking COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES is one you are already familiar with. College credit courses are available through community colleges and state universities, as well as through private colleges or universities and some technical institutes. As you already know, you can combine work experience and classroom activities to earn college credit through cooperative education programs. Another closely related approach is enrolling in CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES. Numerous continuing education courses are offered through community colleges, four-year colleges, universities, and high schools. In some cases, successful completion of a course leads to certification. For instance, you could become a certified Red Cross lifesaver by successfully completing a continuing education course designed for that purpose; with such certification, you would qualify for a job as a lifeguard. Other continuing education courses, such as real estate courses, can count toward the clock hours needed to be eligible to take a licensing test. Still others offer to teach you specific skills, such as typing or basic conversational Spanish, which may be valuable in obtaining jobs.

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS provide a very special approach to more than one hundred occupations including carpenter, electrician, machinist, and brick mason. Governmental agencies supervise the training which is cooperatively set up by unions and industry. The training period is usually four years and combines on-the-job training with some classroom work. As your skill increases as an apprentice, so do wages until you achieve the status and wages of a journeyman. If you think the position you are interested in may be an apprenticeable occupation, talk to your co-op instructor about the programs available in your area.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING is an approach closely related to apprenticeships. Many companies train new employees in the position for which the employee was hired. However, this is most common when the training needed will only take a few days or weeks. For example, if you have good typing and English skills, a company may hire you and then train you as a word processor or typesetter. In addition, many firms offer training to make successful employees eligible for promotions or transfers to other departments. Some companies offer this training themselves while others offer programs that enable employees to take courses elsewhere. If you are happy working for your present firm but would like to upgrade yourself, check into

the company's educational benefits.

INDEPENDENT STUDY is yet another method of preparing for a new job or for a promotion. The specific form of independent study will vary with your goal, but in many cases reading books and journals available in college or public libraries will provide you with necessary information. For instance, if you are a landscape gardener, reading about the history and techniques of the industry, botany, soils, and entomology may prepare you for a promotion. However, independent study may involve much more than reading. If you are a data processor wanting to become a computer programmer, you could buy yourself a microcomputer plus a few books and learn to program in Basic or Fortran. As part of any independent study plan, you have other options as well. For example, you can join a local chapter of an association or club that focuses on your field of interest, subscribe to relevant magazines or journals, and use your weekends or vacations to attend seminars, workshops, and other related meetings. Even though independent study of any kind, including correspondence courses, may be difficult because you are "on your own", it offers the advantage of learning at your own pace for your own needs.

Only you can determine which approach or combination of approaches will be best for you. So, gather

information about the approaches possible for the position that interests you and then choose a training approach that takes into account the time, money, and energy you are willing to invest. If you have difficulty either determining what your choices are or evaluating them, talk to your co-op instructor or stop by the campus co-op office.

Footnotes for Chapter Two

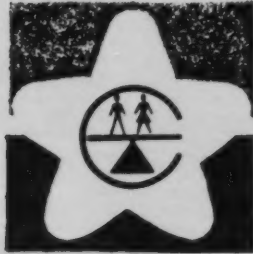
¹The sample questions listed were adapted from those presented in Guide to Career Awareness Skills, experimental edition, by the Career Skills Assessment Program of the College Board, 1977, p. 1.

²The guidelines of the National Vocational Guidance Association are listed as they appear in Guide to Career Awareness Skills, p. 3.

³The sample telephone contacts were adapted from those in a handout entitled "Information Gathering Interview" prepared by Pat LaFitte for the Career Choice Information Center of the University of Texas at Austin, Spring 1977, p. 2.

⁴These sample questions originally appeared in the "Information Gathering Interview" handout by LaFitte, p. 3.

Chapter 3



Making Career Decisions

As an adult, you make numerous decisions each day. Many of those decisions are based on feeling (Do I want another cup of coffee?) or on habit (Which route will I take home?), but the more important decisions (Should I buy a new or used car?) are based on thought. The more important you consider a decision, the more time and thought you are likely to invest in it. Whenever you have invested time and thought in a decision, you have probably used a decision-making process similar to the six step process presented in this chapter:

- (1) defining the problem; (2) gathering information;
- (3) generating alternatives; (4) evaluating and eliminating alternatives; (5) making an action plan; and
- (6) evaluating your decision.

However, before you even begin the process of making a career-related decision, you should ask yourself one important question: "Is now an appropriate

time for me to be making this decision?" Even though career-related decisions are like other major decisions in many ways, timing is of special importance in career decisions. You cannot make career decisions "all at once". For example, if you have decided on a college major and taken two or three college courses, you should not be trying to decide whether you will go to graduate school. That decision should be made no more than one year before you will be eligible to enroll. Being premature with career decisions is as great a mistake as avoiding career decisions or making hasty decisions. Since career decisions are important, they are time consuming, so invest your time wisely by first being certain that the decision you are considering is one you should be making now.

STEP 1: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Even though the idea of defining the problem may seem ridiculously obvious to you, it is a step many people overlook. If you do not analyze the problem at the outset, you may begin by trying to make your third or fourth decision first. For example, if you are thinking of getting another car and you immediately define your problem as "Which new car should I buy?", you **have** assumed that you have already made several important decisions. Your first decision should **be** "Should I change cars now?" If that answer

is yes, your next question should be "Will I buy or lease?" If you decide to buy, then you must decide "Should I buy a new or used car?" Only if you have consciously decided to purchase a new car should you decide "Which new car will I buy?" If you begin with this last question, you are assuming you have made certain decisions, and you are automatically eliminating possible solutions to your problem.

So, when you are making an important decision, it is critical that you state your problem at the outset and that you evaluate every word in the statement to be certain that no one word implies either more or less than what is necessary. The more specific your definition of the problem is the better, and the best way to be specific without limiting your choices is to include goals in your statement of the problem. For instance, a good statement of the car problem might be "To acquire a car that averages at least 22 m.p.g. in the city and involves a monthly obligation of no more than \$145." Notice that "acquire" and "obligation" do not eliminate the idea of a lease.

When your decision is career-related, the same guidelines apply. Define your problem carefully so that the statement does not automatically limit your options, and include goals in your definition to make

it **specific**. If you were trying to make a decision about training for a position such as real estate agent, an effective definition of the problem might be "To complete the 180 clock hours or 60 semester hours necessary for the licensing examination within the next thirty months at an average cost of no more than \$100 per month." This statement of the problem is far better than a general statement that automatically limits choices such as "To decide which college to attend for my real estate major." If you define your decision-making problems carefully and accurately, you will be able to generate more alternatives than someone who rushes over this important step. And, having considered more options, you are more likely to be pleased with the alternative you finally select.

STEP 2: **GATHERING INFORMATION**

If you have followed the suggestions in chapters one and two, you have already completed most of the career-decision work involved in this step. The statement of your problem should dictate the specific information you will need. As you collect information, try to balance the material so that you have both factual and subjective data. Remember the information you gather should be up-to-date and should include facts about the current situation and projec-

tions for the future. Because career areas and markets change, you must have good (i.e. current, accurate, and complete) information to make an effective decision. Use your common sense to determine when you have enough background information for the next step. Also, remember that if you cannot locate the facts you need or people to see in information-gathering interviews, your co-op instructor, a campus career counselor, or someone in the campus placement office may be able to assist you.

STEP 3: GENERATING ALTERNATIVES

This step is comparatively easy and fun once you understand that its purpose is to think of every possible option you have and list each option. In a sense, this stage is your personal brainstorming session. The object is to generate as many ideas as possible. As in any brainstorming session, you should not be evaluating and censoring ideas as they occur--you should only be writing down what occurs to you. In the next step you will be carefully evaluating each idea, so at this stage, you can relax and enjoy your own ideas. Do not worry if you can only think of two options the first time that you sit down. Give yourself a few days to mull over the information you have, and you will probably be able to add alternatives to your list. Before you proceed to the next

step, you should have at least three alternatives and preferably five or more. If, after several days of thinking, you are unable to "come up with" several choices, discuss your situation with your co-op instructor because you may be censoring options without realizing it.

STEP 4: EVALUATING AND ELIMINATING ALTERNATIVES

This step can be quite time-consuming because it represents the point in the decision-making process where you must stop and judge each option in terms of how well it fulfills your own aptitudes, interests, values, and goals. If you have recently completed a thorough self-inventory, you already have the information you need to evaluate how well an alternative can meet your various needs. If you have not conducted a recent self-inventory, you will need to stop now and do one so that you have a valid basis for judging your alternatives. Your co-op instructor will direct you to the appropriate materials.

Most people find it easiest to judge and eliminate options when they approach the task systematically. One of the best approaches is to make a chart similar to the one on the next page. Notice that the options are listed across the top and that the most relevant goals, values, and other personal factors are listed in the order of their importance in the left-hand column.

SAMPLE: CHART TO EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES

Problem: Choose Training Approach for Becoming Real Estate Agent

IMPORTANT FACTORS	OPTION #1 Continuing Education Classes	OPTION #2 Credit Courses	OPTION #3 Private Seminars and Courses
1. COST	\$25-\$75/course plus books	\$75-\$100/semester plus books	\$200-\$400/course plus books
2. EFFECTIVE- NESS	Specific infor- mation not avail- able	84% pass licensing exam	92% pass licensing exam
3. GENERAL REPUTATION OF TRAIN- ING	Usually good but quality varies; get CEU but no credit	Excellent and college credit would count for higher degree	Very good in field but not recognized elsewhere
4. TIME	Uncertain-- ind. courses are 8-12 weeks but not enough are offered	24-30 months-- ind. courses 16 wks. except summer 5 weeks	18-24 months-- ind. courses can range from 1 week to 6 weeks
5. CHOICES OF SPECIFIC PLACES	Excellent-- numerous high schools and colleges	Very good--five community col- leges and one university	Poor--only one established pri- vate school

1

Making a chart like the sample will not automatically solve decision-making problems, but it should help you clarify the issues involved. For example, if that were your sample chart, you would realize that you could not determine the best alternative for yourself without being clear about the relative importance of the various factors you had listed. If cost itself were THE critical factor, then you might choose option #1. If cost were more important than any other single factor but less important than a combination of the next two factors, you would make another choice. Similarly, your long-term goals could affect how you interpret the information listed next to "General Reputation of the Training" while your current job demands and/or family plans might affect your interpretation of the information listed by "Time".

2

If you have difficulty eliminating alternatives, you can make yourself another chart, similar to what you have just seen. This chart should also have options listed across the top, but the left-hand column should have three categories of possible outcomes: (1) the best possible outcome; (2) the worst possible outcome; and (3) other possible outcomes. Forcing yourself to examine the possible consequences of each alternative may not be pleasant, but it serves several important functions. First, being aware of ALL the

effects or results possible (not just the one or two you hope for) shows you what the risks really are. When you understand at the outset both the best and the worst that can happen, you can better judge each alternative. Second, considering the possible outcomes gives you a reality check that provides insurance against unpleasant surprises. Third, understanding the possibilities can help you determine just how "long term" the effects of your decision will be.

As you are listing outcomes you foresee, be very specific. One common problem involves "piggy-backing" or assuming that one outcome will automatically lead to another. For example, if you are listing the possible outcomes of taking a particular course at a particular school, do not jump from the outcome of passing that course to graduating with honors! Also do not assume that liking a course will mean liking the institution that offered it. Another form of piggy-backing involves mixing different aspects. For instance, if you jump from an attitude aspect (like enjoying a course) to a performance aspect (like earning an A), you are making too many assumptions. Consider various aspects when you are listing outcomes, but keep each aspect separate.

Whatever approach you use to evaluate your alter-

natives, you will probably find yourself repeating the process more than once. If you use charts, you may begin with a chart for each alternative. After a few rounds of elimination, you may have just one chart which highlights the facts and possible outcomes of your two "finalists". Congratulate yourself, but be aware that even at this stage of evaluation, you can encounter conflict in your own values. For example, you might value job security and variety equally, but have no one alternative left that offers the combination. If this occurs, give yourself some time to think carefully about those values. If you cannot resolve a values conflict and choose one alternative, you probably need to ask yourself again if now is really the appropriate time to be making this decision. Admitting that now is not the right time for a decision is not the same as irresponsibly avoiding decisions. However, if you are certain a decision now is both necessary and appropriate, then return to step one and ask yourself several questions. Does the definition of the problem assume I have already made certain decisions? If so, did I consciously make those decisions? Have I included unnecessary goals in my definition of the problem? Has the statement itself limited my thinking about alternatives? Do I have all the information I need to make this decision now?

If re-examining your statement of the problem and carefully considering these questions does not help you select one alternative, discuss your situation with a career counselor or your co-op instructor. He or she may be able to help you develop a special action plan that will relieve any sense of pressure to make a decision and enable you to test your alternatives systematically.

STEP 5: MAKING AN ACTION PLAN

The purpose of this step is to help you begin acting on the alternative you have selected. If you have decided credit courses offer the best training approach, you must then list the tasks that decision requires. Here's a sample list.

- A. Decide which colleges I prefer
 - (1) Call for information from possible colleges (catalogues, schedules, applications)
 - (2) Talk to people about the colleges
 - (3) Go through decision-making process to select two colleges
- B. Fill in application forms for selected colleges
- C. Visit each campus
- D. If accepted at both, choose one
- E. Discuss possible courses to take with either a campus counselor or a real estate teacher
- F. Register
- G. Attend classes and study

After you have completed a first draft of your list, check each task to see if you have been as specific as possible. For instance, you might realize that task A.(2) should indicate how many people and what kind of people. Your revision of that task might be "Talk with four real estate students from different colleges." When you are satisfied that the tasks are specific enough, you should assign yourself a deadline for each. As you assign deadlines, be certain you have the control. For example, you can say that by "such and such" a date you will have called each college to request information. However, you cannot say that you will receive the information by a specific date because you do not have control over the people who are supposed to mail it.

Because career-related decisions usually involve many tasks, an action plan can be very valuable. When you use an action plan that includes deadlines, you are not likely to get "off-track". Instead of trying to handle all the implications of a decision at once, you can focus on one task at a time, which will make the job more manageable. In addition, if you are following an action plan, you can see your own progress and enjoy a sense of accomplishment at each step. This is very important because the goal of most career-related decisions cannot be achieved

within a short period of time, so you may really need intermediate goals that you can reach during the process. Finally, having short-term goals to achieve, reaching them, and recognizing them as accomplishments will improve your self-esteem. Whatever your career-related decision may be--choosing a new career, looking for a job, or entering a training program--you will probably need a strong sense of self-esteem to achieve the goal of your decision.

STEP 6: EVALUATING YOUR DECISION

The purpose of this step is to determine whether the decision is effective for you. In the early stages of implementing the decision, you need to schedule re-evaluations of your decision frequently. In fact, it is a good idea to include one or two re-evaluations of your decision in your action plan. For instance, in the real estate agent example, two re-evaluations could be added to the action plan: one that would take place a few weeks before the end of the first semester and another to occur a few weeks before the end of the following semester.

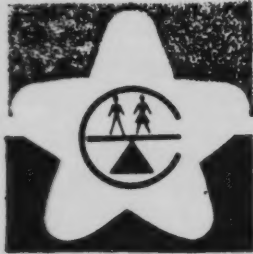
Each time you re-evaluate the decision, you need to make yourself another chart. In the left column, list the goals, values, interests, skills, aptitudes, and needs you wanted the decision to fulfill. Then judge how well each of these is being met. The first

time or two you re-evaluate the decision, you may find yourself writing "I don't know yet" or "I need more information to judge." These responses are quite natural and indicate you are trying to be fair and objective in your evaluation. However, when differences between your expectations and the reality of the situation appear, you must look closely at both. How important is the expectation to you? If that particular value, goal, or need is very important to you, then you need to determine if there is any way the reality can be changed to fulfill your expectation without having to make another major decision.

The idea of re-evaluating your decision is not optional, and it is not a task you can perform once and forget about. Even if a decision initially proves to be very effective in meeting your needs, you must periodically review it. After all, you are a changing individual in a changing world. As new information becomes available and as your needs and values change, you must reconsider each career-related decision you have made. The truth is that even the best decision is not likely to remain effective throughout your life. Career decisions, like other decisions, must be seen as reversible. Just as you would never forget that if you decide to buy a house, you can also decide to sell that house, so you should

never forget that your career decisions can be--and probably will be--reversed. In today's work world, most people make more than two major career changes. So, re-evaluating a career decision is important. Once you realize that any re-evaluation can result in choosing to begin the decision-making process again, you have also realized that career decision-making is a life-long process.

Chapter 4



Beginning the Job Hunt

After you have "researched" yourself and have made a career decision, you are ready to begin seeking that new job. You are more likely to be successful in your search if you consider all the options and handle each phase carefully.

How Should I Go About Job Hunting?¹

The answer is "It depends." "Depends on what?" you might wonder. Well, it depends on who you are, what your background and education are, what type of job you are looking for, and which job-hunting strategy you choose. You see, there are various ways of looking for a job, but the catch is that some are more appropriate in certain situations than in others.

For example, if you are in a field that is currently in demand, perhaps all you will have to do is to register at a local placement office (campus,

state, or private employment agency) and sit back because the employers will come looking for you. If you are looking for a government job, you will need to spend your time filling out forms and taking some standardized tests. If there is moderate to keen competition for jobs in your chosen field, you will need to take a more active, assertive approach. Since moderate to keen competition is the most common situation in today's job market, you need to know more about this approach.

An active, assertive approach to job hunting can be merely walking up and down the streets knocking on doors, asking about openings, and filling out application forms. However, even though that approach is very active, it is also very frustrating. There is a better method that requires you to plan first and then be active and assertive. If you have followed the suggestions in the previous chapters of this book, then you are in an excellent position to take an approach to job hunting that is rewarding as well as active.

Your first task is to set goals that you can achieve. "For example, if your goal is to have a job by 'such and such' a date, you may be asking for disappointment. Getting the job is not under your control because someone else has to make the offer. On

the other hand, the number of contacts you make is much more under your control. So, focus on those things that you can do--those things that, if continued, will probably lead to a position. By focusing on the things that you can do, you enhance your self-esteem during the job-hunting process."² And self-esteem is essential for this multi-step, time-consuming undertaking.

How To Locate Job Openings

There are several possible sources of information about job openings, some more familiar but less effective than others. Perhaps the first source that comes to mind is reading the CLASSIFIED ADS in local newspapers. If an interesting ad includes a phone number, call for additional information about the job. If no phone number is included and you do not understand all of the abbreviations in the ad, you can call the newspaper's classified department to find out what the abbreviations mean. Only respond to a classified ad if you fulfill or nearly fulfill all the stated requirements. For example, if the ad states that three years' experience is required and you have thirty months of experience, you might well apply; if you have no experience, do not apply. If you are looking for a job in another geographical

locale, subscribe to papers in that locale. In addition to the classified ads in daily newspapers, you can check the classified ads in the trade or professional magazines and newsletters of your field. If you do not know whether there are any such publications in your field, talk to your co-op instructor and allocate some time for more research like that suggested in chapter two.

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES or PLACEMENT OFFICES provide another way of finding out about job openings. The procedure for registering varies with the individual office or agency and may take a couple of hours. When you register, inquire about the services offered and fees required. Most state and campus offices provide free counseling and testing, as well as help in preparation for interviews. In addition to these agencies and offices, you can check with the trade or professional associations and unions in your field. Many of these provide placement services either as an on-going service to members or as a special service during state, regional, or national meetings and conventions.

There are two less familiar but more effective methods for locating job openings. One is sending out LETTERS OF INQUIRY (each enclosing a copy of your resume) to companies that interest you and that em-

ploy people in the position you seek. The drawback to this method is that it is the written equivalent of the door-knocking method and it can become frustrating. A better method is to ask FRIENDS and FORMER CO-WORKERS if they know of openings or potential openings. If you have conducted some information-gathering interviews, you can call the contacts you made during that process. Even though these last two methods may not be as well-known, they are very successful: in 1975, when Texas employers were asked the leading sources from which they got job applicants, they ranked "word of mouth" as number one and "people applying without knowing if there is an opening" as number two.³

How To Prepare A Resume

No matter how you find out about job openings, you will need to have a resume ready to send or give potential employers. The purpose of a resume is to provide the prospective employer with an overview of your background, experience, and skills. Usually the employer uses the resume to determine whether to interview an applicant. Since this is frequently the case, it might be helpful to think of the resume as a tasteful advertisement of yourself that says, "This is me at my best; this is what I have done,

can do, and will do for you, the employer."

Much of the information included in a resume is the same that is asked for on a job application form. The primary difference is that the application secures the information the employer wants and your resume presents the information about you that you want to disclose. So, "the resume gives you the opportunity to highlight or stress certain qualifications which you feel an employer should know."⁴ Because the resume is the key to obtaining interviews, you should be willing to invest a substantial amount of time in preparing your resume. In fact, since the resume is your sales tool, you should probably prepare different versions for different types of companies and positions. All versions of your resume should include four kinds of information: (1) who you are; (2) what you would like to do; (3) what you know; and (4) what you have done. In various versions, you simply customize the information in the last three categories so that you are highlighting what will be of most interest and value to a particular type of employer or for a particular position.

Even though there is no one outline to follow in preparing a resume, your resumes will probably fit one of three major categories:

1. **Chronological Resume.** This type of resume summarizes your educational and experiential

qualifications for a particular job or group of jobs. With it, you use reverse chronological order (most recent first) to present your experience and demonstrate that you have the appropriate qualifications. It emphasizes the continuity of your experience and training and is especially effective if you have been moving steadily toward the position you are currently seeking.

2. Functional Resume. This type of resume summarizes your experience in terms of functions or skills rather than specific jobs held. It is particularly advantageous if you have had either very little paid work experience or more work experience than would fit on a single page. The functional resume is also a good choice if you want to move into a field that may not be directly related to your educational background or specific job experience.
3. Combination Resume. This resume combines the previous two types and is probably the most commonly used form. Experience is usually divided into "related" experience and "other" experience, but within each category, information is presented in reverse chronological order. The combination resume is similar to the functional because it includes somewhat detailed descriptions of responsibilities and skills whenever the experience or training is related to the position being sought.

Perhaps the best way to understand these different forms is to study the three resumes of a fictional applicant, Chris T. Seeker. Note that each resume contains essentially the same information because the position sought is the same. However, each format highlights different aspects of the applicant's background.

SAMPLE RESUME: CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT

CHRIS T. SEEKER

14321 Walnut Lane
Dallas, Texas 75214
Phone: (214) 844-6611

JOB OBJECTIVE: TRAINEE POSITION IN MARKETING AND ADVERTISING WITH SOME
OPPORTUNITY FOR FIELD RESEARCH

Education

1980 A.A. Degree, Richland College, Dallas, Texas

1964 Diploma, Truman High School, Waco, Texas

Employment History

January - May 1980 Part-time Trainee in Marketing and Advertising for Sellmore, Inc. of Richardson, Texas. Conducted field surveys and assisted with design of test advertisements.

1979 Student Assistant in Public Information Office of Richland College. Proofread press releases and compiled data for special project on student profiles.

1976-1978 Part-time Temporary Secretary in Various Businesses for Womanpower Temporary Services of Dallas.

1974-1976 Executive Secretary to Assistant Manager of Marketing and Sales for Broadway Department Stores of Minneapolis. Performed usual secretarial duties and undertook special projects including organizing a record and communication system for in-staff meetings.

1971-1974 Part-time Secretary-Clerk for the Owner of Acme Mail Order Company of Bloomington, Minnesota.

1967-1971 Clerk in Public Relations Department (1967-1968). Promoted to Secretary in Research Division (1968-1971) of FOZJ-TV in Chicago. Performed usual clerical-secretarial duties, and in Research Division coded and input data obtained from viewers.

1964-1967 Sales Clerk and Department Manager of Women's Wear for Levinson's Department Store of Milwaukee. Performed usual sales duties and as manager set up procedure with buyer to record most common reasons for buy-outs and close-outs.

Special Qualifications

Training in Statistics	Excellent English Skills	Willingness to Learn
Training in Field Research Techniques	Good Interpersonal Relationship Skills	

SAMPLE RESUME: FUNCTIONAL FORMAT

CHRIS T. SEEKER

14321 Walnut Lane
Dallas, Texas 75214

(214) 844-6611

JOB OBJECTIVE: Trainee position in marketing and advertising with opportunity for research and advancement

OVERVIEW OF RELATED EXPERIENCE

Experience in marketing and advertising as a cooperative education student working for a small advertising firm, as executive secretary to the assistant manager of sales and marketing for a major department store, and as secretary in the research division of a television station.

Experience in public relations as a student assistant in a college public information office and as secretary in the public relations department of a television station.

Experience in direct sales as clerk and manager of a women's wear department of a major department store.

SKILLS IN FIELD RESEARCH

Conducted surveys in stores. Contacted consumers, established rapport, completed forms. Used twelve item packaging questionnaire and averaged eight completions per hour in grocery store. Used eighteen item product use questionnaire and averaged six completions per hour in a grocery-department store (for Sellmore, Inc. of Richardson, Texas, January-May 1980).

Assisted in designing an eight week advertising campaign to test effectiveness of three inch ads run for two small service oriented businesses in different sections of the Sunday papers (for Sellmore, Inc.).

Observed techniques used in telephone surveys designed to gather viewer preferences (for FOZJ-TV of Chicago, Illinois, 1967-1971).

Designed form for clerks to record most common reasons for buy-outs and close-outs (for Levinson's Department Stores of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1964-1967).

SKILLS IN DATA MANIPULATION

Can calculate means, medians, standard deviations, T tests, Chi Squares, and can interpret the significance.

Tabulated data daily from questionnaires for Sellmore, Inc.

Worked with statistician to design student profile study. Gathered data on randomly selected credit and non-credit students and coded data for APL computer (special project as student assistant in Public Information Office of Richland College, 1979).

Coded demographic information from telephone surveys for FOZJ-TV.

EDUCATION: A.A., Richland College, Dallas, Texas, May 1980

Diploma, Truman High School, Waco, Texas, 1964

SAMPLE RESUME: COMBINATION FORM

RESUME

Chris T. Seeker
(214) 844-6611

14321 Walnut Lane
Dallas, Texas 75214

JOB OBJECTIVE: Trainee position in marketing and advertising that involves some research

EDUCATION: A.A. Degree, Richland College, Dallas, Texas May 1980
Diploma, Truman High School, Waco, Texas June 1964

EXPERIENCE: Related Work Experience

Part-time Trainee in Marketing and Advertising
Sellmore, Inc. of Richardson, Texas, January-May 1980
DUTIES: attend weekly staff meetings; conduct field surveys on various food products and tabulate daily findings; assist in designing test advertisements for small service-oriented businesses

Student Assistant in Public Information Office
Richland College of Dallas, Texas, 1979
DUTIES: proofread press releases; enter printing expenses in ledger; gather information from registrar for special project to compile student profiles from data

Executive Secretary to Assistant Manager of Marketing and Sales
Broadway Department Stores of Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1974-1976
DUTIES: usual secretarial responsibilities and special projects; organized record and communication system for in-staff meetings

Clerk in Public Relations Department and Secretary in Research Division
FOZJ-TV of Chicago, Illinois, 1967-1971
DUTIES: as clerk (1967-1968) typed correspondence from dictaphone; promoted to secretary with usual secretarial duties and responsibility of coding and inputing data on viewers

Sales Clerk and Manager, Women's Wear Department
Levinson's Department Store of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1964-1967
DUTIES: regular sales responsibilities; as manager set up procedures with buyer to record most common reasons for buy-outs and close-outs; on personal initiative shopped competition for display and accessory techniques

Other Work Experience

Part-time Temporary Work as Secretary in Various Businesses
Womanpower Temporary Services of Dallas, Texas, 1976-1978

Part-time Secretary-Clerk
Acme Mail Order Company of Bloomington, Minnesota, 1971-1974

SPECIAL

QUALIFICATIONS: Excellent English skills
Basic knowledge of statistics

Now that you have seen the difference in emphasis among the types of resumes, you should be able to select the type that can present you most effectively to prospective employers. If you are uncertain of which type to use, discuss your situation with your co-op instructor or the campus co-op director. Once you know which type of resume would be most effective, you are ready to begin preparing your resumes.

STEP 1: REVIEWING INFORMATION

At this stage you need to review the information you have gathered about yourself and your chosen field. If you are using a chronological or combination format, it will be important to verify your position titles, dates you held various jobs or received degrees, and so on. If you are using a functional or combination format, you need to review your self-inventories so that you will remember the various skills and aptitudes you identified. At this stage it is also important to select employment and personal references, to receive their permission to be your references, and to verify their current position titles, company affiliations, addresses, and phone numbers. Even though you will probably not list your references on the resume itself, you need to have your references lined up and your information

about them complete before you begin distributing resumes.

STEP 2: SELECTING INFORMATION

Once you have collected all the information that might possibly be used in your resume, you need to clarify your purpose (your job or position objective) for each version. Focusing your purpose is very important because your resume itself will be brief (probably just one page but no more than two pages), so it must be selective. Without a clear purpose, you will have no effective means of determining which information to include and which to omit. With a clear purpose, you can judge each detail by asking yourself if the detail will help the prospective employer recognize your value in relation to your purpose. For example, personal information such as your height, age, weight, or marital status will not help a prospective employer recognize your potential value as a real estate broker, draftsman, or quality control technologist. Consequently, there is no reason to include such information on your resume. However, if you want to be accepted into a police academy, then some personal information such as age, height, and weight is relevant because applicants must fulfill certain requirements in these categories to be considered. Since personal data is not legally

job-related, exclude all personal information (except address and phone) unless you are certain that the position you are seeking has specific requirements.

Because you are the one selecting the information to be included on your resume, you can omit what is not so favorable if the omission does not result in a lie. For example, it is perfectly acceptable to omit your overall grade point average (GPA), which may only be mediocre (i.e., 2.1), but to include the grade point average of your business courses which may be strong (i.e., 3.37). Similarly, it is acceptable to mention special projects or responsibilities you have handled very well and not to mention the one or two which were not so successful. Just remember, the purpose of the resume is to HIGHLIGHT the strengths and qualifications you actually have.

STEP 3: DRAFTING THE RESUME

Once you have decided which details to include, you are ready to draft your resume. Virtually every resume begins with identification (name, address, phone number) and a career or position objective. In the identification section, always include a permanent address if that is different from your current address. The section stating your objective will vary from one version to another, but in each version you should state the objective in one or two lines

using action verbs like those you used in your co-op work experience learning objectives. Your job objective should be clearly stated, but it should not be a specific job title if you want to be considered for any one of several related positions.

A section on education or experience should follow the statement of your objective. If your experience is extensive, it should probably precede your educational background. In the educational section, list your most recent college work first (include name of institution, city, state, and any degrees received with dates or the number of hours completed); use the same format for other colleges or technical schools and for your high school. If you have little experience, you should cover education more thoroughly, listing your major and minors as well as brief descriptions of courses related to the job you are seeking. You may include special training courses or seminars you have completed in this education section or in the experience section or even in a separate "Special Qualifications" section.

What you include in the experience section will vary and should be determined by your purpose (see Step 2) and the type of resume selected. If you are using a chronological format, you will be listing the jobs you have held, beginning with your most re-

cent or current position. For each job, you should list the company name and location, your employment dates, your job title, your responsibilities or duties, and your specific accomplishments. Give more details on the responsibilities and accomplishments of jobs you have held that best reveal your qualifications for the position you are now seeking. If you are using a combination format, you will first divide your experience into related and non-related experience. For the related experience section, you will follow the same procedure that you would use for a chronological format, but you will give more details about your job duties and skills. If you are using the functional format, you will begin the experience section with the skill or qualification most important for the position you are seeking, and you will order all information by importance. You will also need to include basic information (location, dates, etc.) about your past employers. Whether your experience section is functional, chronological, or a combination, you can include volunteer work either in the experience section or in a separate, optional section.

In addition to these four basic sections, resumes may include one or more other sections such as "Special Qualifications", "Publications", "Honors", "Special

Activities", or "References". You should have determined in Step 2 which, if any, of these sections to include. The sample resumes in Appendix B will show you how some of these optional sections may be used.

STEP 4: POLISHING THE RESUME

When you have drafted a version of your resume, you need to polish it. The polishing involves two areas: editing and layout (how it is set up on the page). The sample resumes of Chris T. Seeker and those in Appendix B demonstrate some of the many possibilities for layout. In the editing phase, you have to check your resume for clarity, conciseness, and correctness. Each section and each piece of information within a section should be stated clearly and correctly as well as briefly. Incomplete sentences are acceptable, but they should all be parallel (i.e., all begin with "to" or a past tense verb, etc.) In addition, you should be consistent with whatever mark of punctuation you use to separate items.

In the layout phase you want to be certain that your resume looks attractive. "Remember that most people who are in a position to hire see many resumes. Your resume must appeal to them visually so that they will want to read it. If it looks cluttered and disorganized, they will not be enticed."⁵ One key is being

consistent with the way you set up headings and sub-headings. The position and kind of type (all capital letters or underlining for instance) should be the same for each major heading; subheadings should be like one another but different from major headings so the employer can easily see the relationship of different pieces of information. Another key is to use white space effectively. Balance lines that are single spaced with those that are double-spaced and headings that are centered with those that are positioned at the left margin.

STEP 5: EVALUATING THE RESUME

When you are pleased with a polished version of your resume, show it to your co-op instructor or someone in the campus placement office to get an expert opinion of your work. When you work on any project for very long, it becomes difficult to determine for yourself what is effective and what is not. Having someone else read your resume--preferably someone who is familiar with you, your field, and with resumes--is important. What seems very clear and readable to you may not be clear to somebody else. Receiving suggestions about your polished resume and following those suggestions are vital if your aim is to develop an effective resume, one that gets you interviews. Sending out mediocre resumes is more than a waste of

time and money--it is a waste of opportunity. Once you have sent a resume to a company, you cannot send another one two weeks later just because you have improved upon your first one. The time to improve your resume is before you ever send it out.

STEP 6: PREPARING THE FINAL COPY

When you and your evaluator agree that a version of your resume is outstanding, you are ready to have a clean, correct copy made. Use a typewriter that has a dark ribbon and do not settle for a copy that has any errors. Every letter, comma, and space must be perfect on your resume because that resume is your representative to prospective employers. If the resume contains typographical errors or is messy, it is unlikely that you will ever have an opportunity to explain to the prospective employer that you may not be the world's greatest typist. If you cannot type or do not have access to a good typewriter, pay someone to type your resume and demand perfection. Once you have a typed, absolutely correct copy of your resume, xerox it on a first quality machine that can make each copy look like an original (no slick paper and no gray areas). Order about ten more copies than you think you could possibly use.

A Summary of Information on Resume Writing⁶

1. A resume should provide the employer with four kinds of information:
 - a. who you are and where you can be reached,
 - b. what you know,
 - c. what you have done,
 - d. what you would like to do.
2. There is no single prescribed format for resumes.
3. Because there are some differences of opinion regarding types of resumes and content, it is helpful to talk with someone in your field about specific expectations for your field.
4. Follow these general rules for the resume:
 - a. Make it easy to read (use margins and titles to guide the reader).
 - b. Develop separate sections on goals, education, and work experience so the reader can grasp the highlights quickly.
 - c. Keep it brief and to the point by using phrases rather than complete sentences.
 - d. Be certain it is complete and contains the relevant information about your education, experience, and career objectives.
 - e. Have it typed and spaced neatly.
 - f. Make it error-free.
5. A resume is intended to get you an interview, not a job. This means that you don't have to tell a prospective employer everything there is to know about you in the resume. Give enough information to interest the employer in interviewing you.
6. Your resume style and content should be individual to you and your unique background.

How To Prepare A "Cover" Letter

Now that you have your resume ready to send and you know where you want to send it, you need to know how to send it. You cannot simply stick it in an envelope and hope for the best. You must write a letter that will be placed on top of your resume (i.e. a "cover" letter) that tells the employer why you **are** writing and what you are enclosing. If you do not know whether the company has an opening, your cover letter will be a letter of inquiry asking about possible openings and indicating that your resume is enclosed. If you know of an opening, your cover letter will explain how you heard of the opening (through an ad or an individual or a placement service, etc.) and note that your resume is enclosed. If you called and a company sent you an application form, then your cover letter will refer to the telephone conversation and indicate that you are enclosing an application form and your resume.

Usually a cover letter, whatever the specific situation may be, contains only four or five paragraphs. However, before you can write an effective cover letter, you need to know the name of the person to whom you are writing. This may mean making a phone call or two. Be certain you know the correct spelling and pronunciation of the name as well as the form of address the person prefers (Mr., Ms., Miss,

Mrs., Dr., etc.) and his or her proper title (Personnel Manager, Vice-President of Marketing, etc.). The following pages present a suggested outline for cover letters and two samples, one a letter of inquiry and one a response to a newspaper ad.

As the examples illustrate, many of the guidelines that are used for resumes should also be followed in the cover letter. Your cover letter should highlight your achievements which are most relevant to the particular position you are seeking. The letter should contain only the information that directly relates to the purpose, and the information included should be absolutely accurate. The tone of the letter should be confident and businesslike (no slang, no jokes, and no errors). Since good manners are part of good business, your letter should be courteous. If at all possible, your letter and its envelope should be typed neatly, but it should never be sent on the letterhead paper or stationery of your current employer. If you have any questions about the form or content of your cover letter, discuss your situation with your co-op instructor or with someone in the campus placement office. For other examples of cover letters, see Appendix B.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR COVER LETTER⁷

Your Address
City, State Zip
Date

Mr./Ms. Important Person
Position Title
Company Name
Company Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Person:

Your opening paragraph should arouse the reader's interest and state why you are writing the letter. Indicate why you are interested in that particular company.

Your middle paragraph or two should create a desire to interview you. What in your background makes you a possible candidate? State what you want in a job. Point out those things on your resume or other material that you want him/her to notice. State your case clearly, but keep it relatively brief.

Your second-to-last paragraph should ask for some kind of action. Be specific as to your plans for follow-up. Are you requesting an application form or an appointment for an interview? Will you call or drop by for a visit?

Your final paragraph should be a single statement expressing thanks for his/her attention to your letter.

Sincerely yours,

A Bright Applicant

SAMPLE: COVER LETTER THAT IS LETTER OF INQUIRY

14321 Walnut Lane
Dallas, Texas 75214
August 4, 1980

Ms. Marilyn Szantor
Executive Vice President of Marketing
Allied Stores, Inc.
1004 Main Street
Dallas, Texas 75203

Dear Ms. Szantor:

Would you be interested in interviewing an experienced applicant who is eager to begin working in a trainee capacity? Because Allied is a nationally recognized leader in retail marketing, I am especially interested in being considered for any marketing trainee position you may have now or in the near future. I am enclosing my resume in the hope that if no opening exists now, one may develop for which I might be considered.

As a student at Richland College, I participated in the cooperative education program by working part-time for Sellmore, Inc. of Richardson. In that position, I gained valuable experience in two aspects of market research: field surveys and test advertisement programs. In addition to my recent training and marketing experience, I have six years of experience in retail. Because most of my full-time experience has been in department stores, I want to combine that knowledge of department store operations with my recent training in marketing.

My experience with Sellmore, coupled with my previous years of experience in retail businesses and marketing, has given me a unique perspective and valuable skills. I have worked directly with retail customers as clerk and manager and indirectly through a mail order business. I have participated in market research for a television station and observed the development of a new marketing program for a major department store. In short, my employment history for the past several years has been aimed at the possibility of one day having the opportunity to work in the marketing field for a leader in retailing, such as Allied.

Because of my experience and my interest in Allied, I would very much appreciate an opportunity to talk with you. I will call your office next Tuesday to see if you will meet with me to discuss the possibility of my employment.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely yours,

Chris T. Seeker

(Ms.) Chris T. Seeker

Encl: Resume (Chronological Format or
Combined Format)

SAMPLE: COVER LETTER IN ANSWER TO A NEWSPAPER AD

14321 Walnut Lane
Dallas, Texas 75214
August 4, 1980

Mr. William B. Johnson
Personnel Director
Datasearch Institute
13330 Caplane Drive
Dallas, Texas 75209

Dear Mr. Johnson:

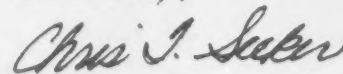
I am enclosing my resume in answer to your advertisement in the August 3rd edition of the Dallas Morning News for a research trainee in marketing and advertising. Because research is the facet of marketing that most interests me and because Datasearch is recognized as a leader in research design, I am especially interested in this position.

As a student at Richland Community College, I have recently completed a cooperative education work experience with Sellmore, Inc. of Richardson. In that part-time position, I gained valuable experience conducting field surveys of various food products and assisting in evaluation of newspaper ads for small service-oriented businesses. In addition, my background in statistics is strong. I am familiar with FORTRAN, because I coded data on viewer preferences for a television station, and with APL, because I worked with a statistician designing a student profile study. My resume provides additional information that demonstrates the skills and experiences I can bring to this position.

I am eager to be considered for a position with a firm of the reputation of Datasearch. I will call you on Monday, August 11, to determine when an interview can be arranged. If you should wish to set up an interview prior to that time, you may reach me during the day at the number listed on my resume.

Thank you for considering me for this position.

Sincerely,



Chris T. Seeker

Encl: Resume (Functional)

How To Fill In A Job Application Form

The rules here are very similar to the rules you should follow when taking a test. The first rule is to read through the entire form before you try to fill it in. The next rule is to read the directions carefully and follow them exactly. If you are uncertain about what is expected in any portion of the form, ask for clarification.

If you have the application at home, type it if possible. If you cannot type it, print neatly. Fill in all the blanks; if an item does not apply, write "N.A." for "not applicable" or write "none". Be certain the information you give is accurate; most applications indicate that incorrect information on the application form is grounds for terminating your employment. If the application asks you to make a statement or write a short paragraph describing your philosophy or your opinion of your best contribution, et cetera, draft your statement on a separate sheet and polish it. When you are certain it is clearly and correctly stated, copy it onto the application form. For better or worse, the application form is assumed to reflect your work habits, so even if you are told that completing the application form is a mere formality, spend the time necessary to fill in the form neatly and correctly.

Footnotes for Chapter Four

¹The material in this subsection has been adapted from a four-page handout entitled "How to Job Hunt" prepared by Bob Murff for the Career Choice Information Center of the University of Texas at Austin, April 1977.

²Murff, p. 3.

³"Qualities Employers Like, Dislike in a Job Market: Final Report of Statewide Employer Survey," a brochure prepared by the Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas, 1975.

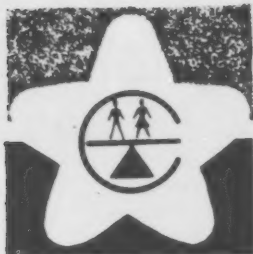
⁴Joel M. Jeter, Handbook for Co-op Students: Resume Interviewing (Elgin Community College, no date), p. 6.

⁵"Preparing a Resume," a five-page handout prepared by the Career Choice Information Center of the University of Texas at Austin (no date), p. 3.

⁶Jeter, p. 8.

⁷This cover letter outline has been adapted from "Cover Letter - A Possible Outline" prepared by Bob Murff, February 1977, for "Liberal Arts Placement Presents The Job Hunter Survival Kit," compiled by Lupe Morin for the University of Texas at Austin.

Chapter 5



Being Interviewed and Deciding on Offers

Once you have reached the stage of the personal employment interview, you will be very aware of its importance. The personal interview is the basis for most hiring decisions. You will be better able to respond to the interviewer if you know what to expect and how to prepare for the interview. You will also feel more comfortable if you grasp the dual purpose of the interview. The employment interview is not just an opportunity for the company person to evaluate you; it is also an opportunity for you to "look at" the company and gather information about it.

How To Prepare For An Interview

Your first responsibilities with regard to the interview are easy to fulfill. When you are arranging the date and time of an interview, be certain to verify the name (and the pronunciation of the name)

of the person who will be interviewing you, his or her position, and the location of the interview. At the same time, ask a few other questions. "How much time is being allocated for the interview?" "Will I be expected to fill in an application form either prior to or immediately following the interview?" "Will I be asked to take any tests either before or after the interview?" If the answer to the last question is "Yes", ask how long the tests usually take. You need all this information to plan your time effectively and to prepare mentally for the interview. Write down this information about the interview because it is too important to rely solely on memory.

One of the biggest criticisms that employers have of job applicants is that applicants come to interviews with too little information about the position and/or the firm. If you walk into an interview with almost no information, you give the impression that your attitude is "Well, here I am. What can you do for me?" On the other hand, if you are relatively well-informed and can ask knowledgeable questions about the position and the company, you will stand out and will give the impression that you are seriously interested in that particular company and position.¹

However, to be an informed applicant, you will need to invest some time in preparing for each inter-

view. If you did the research suggested in chapter two, you already have information on the responsibilities, working conditions, and pay ranges common for each type of position you are seeking. All you need to do is to review that information for the particular position and then find out about the specific company that is interviewing you. You should know the size of the firm (the approximate number of employees and divisions, etc.), the location of the home office or plant, the nature of the company (profit or non-profit, common stock or not, etc.), the purpose of the business (production, research, sales, service, or a combination of these), and the relationship of the position you are seeking to that overall purpose.

There are several possible sources for this information. When you first contact a firm as a prospective applicant, it is perfectly acceptable to ask that company to send you information. If you made contacts with people in the firm during your information-gathering interviews, you could call those contacts. You can also check with the campus placement office for brochures about individual companies. In addition, association and trade journals often include information about particular firms, so the library is a good place to look. Dun and Bradstreet and Standard and Poor's Register can provide finan-

cial information about the company. If you have trouble locating information, check with a librarian, your co-op instructor, or the campus placement office.

When you have finished your pre-interview information gathering, spend some time thinking about what you still do not know about the company and the position that you will want to know when you leave the interview. Then jot down questions you want answered during the initial interview. Some common and valid questions are listed here to stimulate your thinking:

- * How are employees evaluated? (By whom? How often? What kind of form is used?)
- * What kinds of in-service or on-the-job training are offered?
- * Who would my supervisor be?
- * What is his or her management style?
- * How many other employees are reporting to the same supervisor?
- * **Has** there been much turn-over in this position?
- * What happened to the last person who had this job?

Your own questions should reflect what is important to you--those work values you identified at the beginning of the process. Notice that not one of the questions listed above deals with salary or benefits.

The time to ask about money and benefits such as insurance, vacation, sick leave, and so on is at the

time you are offered the position. If the interviewer introduces the subject and outlines the company's benefits, you may ask a question or two, but if your only questions during the entire interview are in the money-benefits-"What's in it for me?"-category, you are not likely to receive many offers.

On the day of the interview, you need to allocate plenty of time so that even a traffic jam will not make you late. You should dress conservatively and neatly. For example, if you expect bluejeans and t-shirts to be appropriate on the job, you should wear a nice pair of slacks and sports shirt or blouse to the interview; if you think a suit or dress would be appropriate on the job, wear that to the interview. Then, before you leave home, be sure you have the appropriate information with you (i.e. the location, the interviewer's name, the questions you want to ask, your list of references typed and ready either to give the interviewer or to attach to the application, etc.).

If you are applying for a position in a field that requires you to produce creatively (such as commercial art, architecture, landscape design, or some similar type of work), you will need to take a portfolio with you to the interview. The portfolio may contain original samples of your work or may be a slide collection that the interviewer will review

during or after the appointment. If you think that samples of your work would improve your ability to sell yourself to a prospective employer, talk to your co-op instructor about the kinds of portfolios or demonstrations common in your field and about how to select and organize your samples.

The last kind of preparation for a personal interview is emotional or psychological preparation. If you have gathered the information suggested, you will be going into the interview as an informed applicant. This itself will make you stand out, so you can go into the interview with a positive, confident attitude. Unlike many applicants, you know yourself (your strengths, weaknesses, goals, and values), you have some information about the firm, and you know what the position involves. In other words, you know what you have to sell and why the firm you are interviewing with is a good target for you. So, as you walk toward the building, remind yourself that this is a meeting scheduled to exchange information and try to relax so that you can be your "best" self.

What To Expect In An Interview

A "typical interview" is as difficult to find as a "typical adult". Your initial interviews will vary depending on the organization, the interviewer,

the setting, and numerous other factors."² About the only thing you can count on is that the interviewer will begin by introducing himself or herself and probably follow that with a minute or two of ice-breaking chitchat. The person interviewing you may be a professional interviewer (the personnel manager or a recruiter for a large firm) or may be the person who will be your supervisor if you are hired. The difference depends on the organization. Some firms have the personnel office or a higher level supervisor do the initial interviews and then send acceptable applicants to the immediate supervisor for the final decision. Other organizations have the immediate supervisor conduct the initial interviews and select the best applicants for a second interview with a higher level supervisor or with the personnel office. Still other companies, especially smaller ones, have a one-step interview process conducted either by the immediate supervisor or the owner. The company's interview policy and the position of the person doing the initial interview will affect both the kind of interview you have and the time it will take for you to learn the outcome.

Whenever you have an interview with the person who will be your immediate supervisor, you can expect different kinds of questions than you are likely to be asked by someone less directly involved with

your work. In general, you can expect the immediate supervisor to concentrate on rather specific questions about your education and experience. Since the immediate supervisor wants to determine your job knowledge, the issues that he or she will raise will vary depending on the position you are seeking. However, some common topics are these:

- *tools
- *machines
- *procedures
- *products
- *theories
- *regulations

The supervisor will ask questions to determine your familiarity with specific tools, machines, procedures, et cetera. Remember that he or she wants to find out how much or how little on-the-job training you will need. Since the supervisor usually knows the job well, it is not wise to bluff. If you are not familiar with a particular machine, product, regulation, or whatever, say so. If you have had experience with a similar tool or machine, volunteer that.

The immediate supervisor's primary concern is to determine whether you can handle the job with minimal training, and whether you seem likely to "fit in" with those you will be working with. It is not uncommon

for an immediate supervisor to give you a "tour" of the area in which you will be working, to introduce you to potential co-workers, and to discuss procedures, machinery, and the like with you. In this type of interview, you may become comfortable rather quickly, because, whatever your field, engaging in "shop talk" is familiar and you can focus quite naturally on what is being discussed rather than on how nervous you feel.

Because professional interviewers are comparatively distant from the job you will be performing, they will probably take an approach to the interview which is quite different from the immediate supervisor's approach. However, professional interviewers, like psychologists, do not all take the same approach. Some may be very structured, asking you questions in a particular order and in a manner that virtually dictates the length of your answers. Such interviewers are very interested in the specific information of your answers. Other professionals may deliberately use a non-directive approach that is so loosely structured you may wonder if you are being interviewed at all.

Those who use a non-directive approach will ask very open-ended questions and expect you to do most of the talking during the interview. They usually

are more interested in your ability to think and communicate clearly than in the details of your answers. The non-directive interviewer will probably begin with a very broad "question" like "Tell me about yourself" or "Describe your background and experience." You should have a fairly well-organized three-to-five minute response ready for such questions. Think of your answer as a "sales pitch" for yourself. Modesty is not a good policy to follow in formulating your response. Your answer should outline the qualifications (training and experience) and work habits you have that most clearly relate to the job you are seeking. Even though the non-directive interviewer will state questions very broadly, he or she will cover various issues:

- *your work experience
- *your education and training
- *your work habits
- *your view of what makes a good employee (or supervisor or accountant or salesperson, etc.)
- *your future plans
- *your leisure activities or interests

Remember that no matter how the question is phrased, the underlying question is "Why should we hire you?"

When you encounter a non-directive interviewer, you would be wise to "take charge". Structure your responses carefully so that you have an opportunity

to mention the qualifications and experience you consider most relevant to the position. Limit each response to five minutes. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer while you are talking and watch for signs of interest or boredom. As you conclude each response, summarize what you have said. Then, indicate that you have only given the highlights and ask if the interviewer would like more detailed information on any point. Finally, remember that in dealing with a non-directive interviewer, it is extremely important that you do not allow yourself to get "off the track". This type of interviewer may very well let you babble along and then eliminate you as an applicant because you were not able to focus on the critical issue--why you qualify for the position.

Dealing with an interviewer who takes a directive approach is quite different. In a directive interview, you will be very aware of being interviewed. In fact, you may feel you are being quizzed. The directive interviewer maintains careful control of the session and asks very specific questions. If, before the interview, you think about some of the issues likely to be raised, you will probably feel comfortable during the interview. The following pages outline issues most commonly raised by professional directive interviewers. Reading through these issues can help

you prepare for both directive and non-directive interviews. If, as you read an issue, your first reaction is "Ugh--I certainly hope nobody brings that up," then you need to think about that issue and try to come up with a reasonable response before you ever walk into an interview. Even though your answers do not have to be long, they must include reasons and/or examples. Your co-op instructor will be happy to discuss any of these issues with you, as well as help you develop answers for the more difficult ones.

CATEGORY: WORK EXPERIENCE

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to determine your job knowledge, your work values, and your suitability both for the particular position you are seeking and for the company in general.

- *your duties in a typical day
- *your most and/or least favorite current job duty or responsibility
- *your most and/or least favorite job held
- *your most and/or least favorite supervisor
- *the best and/or worst company you have worked for
- *how you got specific jobs
- *why you have left specific jobs
- *your attendance record
- *whether you can get recommendations from previous employers
- *how you **get** along with co-workers, supervisors, subordinates

- *what of importance you have learned from previous jobs
- *what you have accomplished in previous jobs
- *what change(s) for the better you have created in previous jobs

CATEGORY: EDUCATION

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to determine your decision-making, goal-setting, and time-management abilities as well as your commitment to your field. In addition, your responses can reflect your stability, initiative, and willingness to learn, grow, and change.

- *why you decided to go to college
- *why you chose that particular college
- *how and/or why you chose your major
- *whether you changed majors and why
- *which courses you liked most and/or least
- *in which courses you made your best and/or worst grades
- *whether your grades reflect your ability
- *your attendance record
- *how much you study
- *what changes in courses and/or study habits you would make if you were starting over
- *extracurricular activities (if none, why?)
- *why you left school
- *what training you have had since school or outside school

CATEGORY: FUTURE PLANS

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to determine your ambition, stability, willingness to

learn and grow, and your motivation.

- *what your goals were when you left school
- *what your goals are now
- *your educational plans
- *which job you would like most in this company
- *how long you hope to work in this position
- *how long you hope to work for this company
- *what you hope to be doing in 5 or 10 years

CATEGORY: JOB RELATED QUALITIES

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to find out about you as an individual.

- *your greatest strength
- *your greatest weakness
- *the highlight of your life
- *the greatest change in you as a person in the last 2 or 5 or 10 years
- *your health
- *what you see as qualifications necessary for success in this occupation

CATEGORY: ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS JOB

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to determine your ambition and your suitability for this particular job and company. Your responses should reveal that you have spent time gathering information about the company as well as the field.

- *the most appealing aspect of this job
- *the least appealing aspect of this job
- *what qualities you see as necessary for success in this position

- *the easiest aspect of the job
- *the most difficult aspect of the job for you
- *any areas you feel you may need additional experience and/or training
- *what about this company interests you

CATEGORY: YOUR NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to determine your work values and your flexibility. Since flexibility is highly valued, avoid talking in particulars, especially dollar amounts, specific times, et cetera. If you can honestly do so, show yourself to be open-minded; answer questions about hours, pay, travel and such in terms of being willing to accept "reasonable" or "fair" terms.

- *type of supervisor you prefer
- *type of company you prefer
- *whether you prefer to work alone or with others
- *whether you prefer routine or varied duties
- *whether you prefer regular, fixed hours or flexible schedules
- *willingness to work overtime
- *willingness to work weekends as regular hours
- *willingness to travel
- *willingness to relocate
- *willingness to accept temporary position (not generally a good idea)
- *salary expected
- *benefits expected
- *date you could begin work

CATEGORY: PERSONAL LIFE

By raising these issues, the interviewer is trying to establish your leadership, maturity, breadth of interests, and social compatibility with other workers. However, these questions are rather delicate. The interviewer is on dangerous ground whenever he or she asks for answers that reveal information which could be used to discriminate against you on the basis of your age, race, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, and so on. For example, the interviewer can ask how you prefer to spend your Sundays but cannot ask which church or religious group you belong to. Similarly, the interviewer cannot ask how many children you have, whether you intend to have children or have more children, or whether you have arranged child care. After you have been hired, of course, you may be asked personal questions for insurance coverage, persons to notify in case of an emergency, and so on. Because this is a sensitive area, comments follow some issues that may be raised.

*community activities you are involved in
(Describe activities without naming specific organizations, political parties and so on. For example say "I am program chairperson for one of my church groups" or "I am very active in my precinct.")

*hobbies

*leisure activities

*driving record

(It is legal to ask if you have a valid license and how many citations you have received. However, prior to being hired, you should not be asked whether you have ever been denied a fidelity bond or arrested or convicted for anything other than a traffic violation.)

*health

Even though this long outline of "typical issues" may unnerve you now, remember that being aware of what you might be asked puts you in a better position to answer well if and when you are asked. Also remember

that no one interviewer will raise all of these issues. Although you may choose to volunteer personal information during an interview (information the interviewer cannot legally ask), it is best to keep the focus on the experience and qualifications that relate directly to the position you are seeking. If you are asked personal questions, do not assume the interviewer wants to hear a detailed account of the pains and pleasures of your life. Instead, analyze the question to determine what relevant information the interviewer wants and provide only that information. If you cannot see any relevance, you might ask the interviewer to rephrase the question or provide examples of the kind of information he or she is seeking.

If you think you are being asked a question that is unlawful and you do not wish to answer it (but you do want the position), you might tactfully remind the interviewer that this is legally sensitive ground. Try saying, "Should we be discussing this now?" or "Wouldn't it be more appropriate to discuss this issue after you have hired me?" If you feel you were not hired because you refused to answer one or more questions that would have elicited unlawful information, contact your local Equal Employment Opportunity Commission office to discuss the situation.

The interviewer will usually signal the end of the interview session with both behavior and words.

Often, the interviewer will rise to shake your hand while commenting on having enjoyed the opportunity to meet you. Be certain to thank the interviewer for his or her time. If the interviewer has not made clear what the process is (when you will be notified of the outcome, or the next step), ask for this information before leaving. It is also good to let the interviewer know that you will contact her or him at the appropriate time. For instance, the interviewer may tell you that all interviews will be completed by the end of the week and a decision made the following Tuesday. Thank the interviewer for the interview and the information, and say that you will call on Tuesday afternoon to find out what the decision is. Do not leave yourself in the position of having to sit at home waiting for the phone to ring. You may need to be out on another interview next Tuesday, so keep control of the situation.

After you have left the interview, you need to evaluate your performance, but you must realize that it is quite normal to feel uneasy. It is especially natural to think of several points you should have made but did not, and to wish you had not made some of the comments you did. Consider each interview a learning experience. A common problem is to feel that something is wrong with you if you are not offered every job for which you are interviewed. You

must realize that many variables influence the employment process, and one of the variables over which you have no control is the interviewer.

The interviewer, as a human being, brings a set of preconceived likes and dislikes into the interview situation. A good interviewer will attempt to minimize the impact of these personal factors, but it is very difficult for any person not to form a first impression of another based on a face-to-face contact. You may be well qualified for a position and still not be hired because of a lack of rapport with the interviewer or with other workers in the firm. This does not mean that something is "wrong" with you; it only means the "fit" with the organization was not right.³ So, if you have avoided the factors which are commonly considered negative (see Appendix C) and still are not offered a position, do not invest energy in attacking yourself--invest your energy in preparing for the next interview.

How To Write A Thank You Letter

You should follow most interviews with a short letter thanking the interviewer for his or her time. The purpose of this letter is to demonstrate your courtesy and initiative as well as to remind the interviewer of your interest and your strengths. This

letter may be typed or handwritten (be certain your writing is legible). The letter only needs three paragraphs as the suggested outline and sample illustrate.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR FOLLOW UP/THANK YOU LETTER

Your Address
City, State Zip
Date

Mr./Ms. Personal Interviewer
Position Title
Company Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Interviewer:

Your first paragraph should thank the individual for the interview held on a particular day. You should also indicate what you found especially interesting or valuable in the interview. You might also let the interviewer know that you are considering other positions.

Your second paragraph should remind the interviewer of how your major strengths can help his or her company.

Your final paragraph should indicate your next action and repeat a thank you to the interviewer for his or her time.

Sincerely,

Your Name

402 Bluebird Lane
Richardson, Texas 75080
August 6, 1980

Mr. Donald Stone
Accounting Department Manager
Newday, Inc.
1212 Gold Street
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Mr. Stone:

Thank you for the time you spent with me on Monday, August 5, 1980, discussing my possible employment at Newday. Our meeting was a very productive one for me. I found your description of the expansion plans for your department interesting and quite different from those at other places where I am considering positions.

I hope you will keep my experience in establishing procedures in cost analysis in mind as you review applicants for this challenging new position.

I will call you next Wednesday, August 11, 1980, to check on the status of my application. Thanks again for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Terry Green

Terry Green

How To Decide Among Offers

Because job seeking is such a time-consuming process, you might be tempted to accept the first offer you receive just to be through with the process. If possible, reject that temptation. If you receive an offer while you are making your follow-up phone calls, thank the person for the offer and say that you would like some time to consider it before making a commitment. Even if the employer pushes you by saying "I'd hoped you would start before next week," you can say that you take the idea of getting or changing a job very seriously and you want to be certain you are making the right decision. Asking for a week to make a decision is reasonable, but for most jobs you cannot expect to be granted any more time than that.

You need to be systematic in evaluating each offer. Use your own work values as your guideline for selecting or rejecting offers. One approach is to make a chart for each offer. Each chart should list the facts about the position that relate to your own work values. By using a number scale to rank or weigh your work values and the facts about the position, you can arrive at a more objective evaluation of each offer. The sample charts which follow use a five point scale, with five (5) high and one (1) low.

SAMPLE: OBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF JOB OFFERS⁴

COMPANY #1

MY WORK VALUES AND INTERESTS	MY VALUE	FACTS ABOUT JOB AND COMPANY	RATING	TOTAL RATING
Variety	5	Primarily cost analysis	3	15
Chance to Advance	4	Salary increases only	2	8
Good Working Conditions	3	Private office, own secretary, good computer system	5	15
High Salary	2	\$22,500	4	8
Interaction Opportunities	2	Little, will be isolated	1	2
Convenient Hours	2	Largely set my own	5	10
Close to Home	1	8 miles, little traffic	4	4
Good Fringe Benefits	1	Medical/dental OK, vacation/holiday excellent	4	4
			TOTAL RATING	66

COMPANY #2

MY WORK VALUES AND INTERESTS	MY VALUE	FACTS ABOUT JOB AND COMPANY	RATING	TOTAL RATING
Variety	5	Excellent as part of group assigned to special projects	5	25
Chance to Advance	4	Salary plus higher management position possible	5	20
Good Working Conditions	3	Semi-private office, parking paid, old building, computer system is OK	3	9
High Salary	2	\$19,200	2	4
Interaction Opportunities	2	Regular work with other accountants	4	8
Convenient Hours	2	8:30AM-5:30PM, one hour lunch	3	6
Close to Home	1	12 miles, downtown, can park and ride	2	2
Good Fringe Benefits	1	Medical/dental excellent, Vacation/holiday OK	4	4
			TOTAL RATING	78

Value Key: 5=Extremely important, 4=Very important, 3=Important
2=Desirable but not important, 1=Desirable but not necessary

Rating Key: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Satisfactory, 2=Fair, 1=Poor

If the person completing these sample charts really does place a high value on variety and opportunity to advance, then Company 2 has made the better offer for that individual. Objectively evaluating each job offer will help you explain your decision to the companies you reject. More importantly, though, a systematic and objective evaluation of offers clarifies the issues involved in the decision. If you experience "new job blues" later on, you won't be plaguing yourself with questions like "Why didn't I take Company X's offer?"

How To Write Letters of Acceptance or Rejection

At this stage in the process, letter writing should be both familiar and comfortable. Acceptance and rejection letters have the dual purpose of demonstrating your courtesy and "keeping the record straight". Your letter of acceptance should indicate your decision and review the major points of the employment agreement (position title, starting date, and salary). Your rejection letters are equally important because you want all of the contacts you have made to think as highly of you at the end of the process as when they made their offers. After all, any employer you are turning down now may have an attractive offer for you some time in the future. So, in

rejection letters, thank the person for the time and consideration given you and, if possible, explain the primary reason you have chosen another company. For example, you might state that, right now, you need exposure to the competition of a large firm. Following are examples of one acceptance and one rejection letter.

SAMPLE: ACCEPTANCE LETTER

402 Bluebird Lane
Richardson, Texas 75080
August 28, 1980

Mr. Donald Stone
Accounting Department Manager
Newday, Inc.
1212 Gold Street
Dallas, Texas 75202

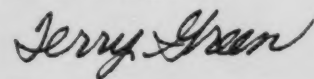
Dear Mr. Stone:

I am pleased to accept the position of Auditor/Junior Accountant with Newday, Inc., at the annual salary of \$19,200 that we discussed. I have notified my current employer and will be able to begin work at Newday on Monday, September 8, 1980.

If you need any additional information in order to process my employment papers, please contact me.

Again, I would like to thank you for the consideration and assistance you have given me. I am certainly looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Terry Green

SAMPLE: REJECTION LETTER

402 Bluebird Lane
Richardson, TX 75080
August 18, 1980

Ms. Mary Fields
Vice-President of Business Affairs
Driveco, Inc.
1417 Cove Road
Dallas, TX 75211

Dear Ms. Fields:

I am writing to inform you that I have decided not to accept the offer from your firm but have, instead, accepted an offer from another firm. The decision was a difficult one for me, but I feel that joining a firm which is expanding and reorganizing its accounting department will provide me with more varied opportunities.

Thank you so much for the consideration and assistance you have given me. Because Driveco is such a fine firm, I am certain you will have little difficulty in finding another suitable applicant for the position.

Sincerely,

Terry Green

Terry Green

When you have mailed your letters of acceptance and rejection, you can congratulate yourself on having successfully completed a very time-consuming process. You can also remind yourself that the next time you are seeking a job, the process will be more familiar to you and less difficult.

Footnotes for Chapter Five

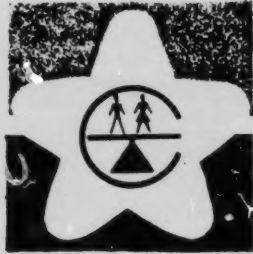
¹This paragraph has been adapted from the Handbook for Co-op Students: Resume Interviewing by Joel M. Jeter for Elgin Community College (no date), p. 18.

²Jeter, p. 21.

³Jeter, p. 21.

⁴This chart is an adaptation of the "Job Comparison Chart" in the Guide to Employment-Seeking Skills by John D. Krumboltz and Daniel A. Hamel for the Career Skills Assessment Program of the College Board, 1977, p. 11.

Chapter 6



Getting Along on the Job

If you are like most people, your reactions upon accepting a new job are quite positive--relief at being through with the job-hunting process, anticipation of the challenges and rewards the new job offers, curiosity about your future co-workers, and so on. However, when your first day on the new job arrives, you may find those positive feelings almost overshadowed by anxiety. If you have spent a lot of time finding the job and have accepted it because it has the potential of fulfilling your needs, then you really have an investment in this particular job's "working out". In short, you want to be successful in the position.

The characteristics of a successful employee can usually be divided into three categories: (1) knows his or her job well; (2) establishes effective relationships with co-workers; and (3) displays good work habits. One important factor underlies and

connects these categories--the employee's attitude toward work. Since attitude is the key, your chances for success are greater when you approach the new job wanting it to "work out". However, that same desire to succeed is likely to make you sensitive to the stress that is part of beginning a new job. So, before considering the characteristics of successful employees, you should take a look at some of the problems people encounter on new jobs and the mistakes they can make.

What Are Some Common "New Job" Mistakes and How Can I Avoid Them?

The first several days in any new job tend to be difficult. Unfortunately, you will probably find this just as true for your fourth or eighth job as it was for your first. If your new job is with a different company, you have the added responsibility of learning new company policies and procedures. If your job is the result of a promotion or transfer within the same company, you have a different set of problems. In addition to the pressures and problems of the particular situation, there are certain stresses common to all new jobs. As a result of all the stress, many people find themselves acting as they would not ordinarily behave. The following excerpt from an article entitled "First Days on the Job: How To Start Off on

the Right Foot" (which appeared in the October 17, 1979 edition of the Dallas Times Herald) offers some valuable reminders and describes some of the more common "pitfalls" or mistakes.

Starting a new job isn't easy. Looking at the composed faces of old-timers may lead you to wonder whether the confusion will ever clear up. All of these people went through the same experience. Although you may lack expertise, self-confidence, and may make many mistakes, you, too, will survive.

You were hired because, at the time of your interview, you sold yourself to your employer. He or she felt that your knowledge, ability, and personality could be valuable to the company. You will remain on the payroll only as long as you are able to do your part in increasing the company's profits. Your first few days may determine whether you have a long-term opportunity to prove your worth.

Most personnel people tell us that they can generally tell how a new employee is going to work out within the first week. In a sense, every new employee is on trial. Your co-workers and supervisors not only hope that you will be able to adjust and perform your job well but be congenial and easy to get along with as well. Here are some types that you don't want to be:

THE EFFICIENCY EXPERT. "Now, the way we did it at the XYZ Company" is one of the key phrases of this employee. Although he doesn't work at the XYZ Company any longer, many of his co-workers will soon wish that he did. Wait until you know your new job well before attempting many innovations. There may be particular reasons you will learn later why your new employer does not do it like they did at XYZ. When you do make suggestions, be tactful.

MR. OR MS. ZEST. Too much enthusiasm and pleasantness can be almost as harmful as lack of them. Your co-workers will know that you like your job by your actions. A friendly smile and pleasing manner are important. Yet, if you appear to be

too much of an eager-beaver, you stand the danger of being branded a phony.

THE TIME WASTER. Resist the urge to chat with other employees about matters not directly related to your job. You want to be punctual and complete your work thoroughly without small talk. Give a day's work for a day's pay. Particularly avoid prying or personal questions.

THE BLUFFER. Be honest about tasks, policies, procedures, or techniques which you don't understand. Take the time to learn. Don't be afraid to ask questions about matters which are unclear. Don't say "uh-huh" if you really don't understand. After all, your employer wants you to be productive and proud of your company.

THE CRISIS MAKER. Don't throw yourself into panic during tense situations. Keep your cool. Use calm, deliberate action to solve problems such as calls from irate customers.

THE COMEDIAN. Most employers prefer not to have a clown on the staff. The joker embarrasses some workers and offends others.

THE GOSSIPER. Be loyal to your employer. Gossip about your company or its employees can result in a reprimand or dismissal. You may not know all the reasons for their actions. In many cases, the gossip isn't true. Demonstrate loyalty with an open mind and a closed mouth. Employers like employees who are positive thinking and enthusiastic. Nobody likes someone who frequently complains and defames the company.

Don't evade responsibility with a "I'm too busy" or a "that's not my job" attitude. Promotions and raises go to the willing workers. Associate with those on your team who are of the "can do" variety.

The truth is that the desire to be successful in a new position and have others think well of you, can create problems. Reacting to a new job situation by adopting roles like those just described

may antagonize co-workers. If you have some work experience, you have probably observed new employees trying to impress others with their expertise, enthusiasm, humor, or whatever. And, you know the negative responses that behavior usually brings. So, even though it is difficult, try to relax and "be yourself" during the first days on the job. Nobody is expecting you to be Wonderwoman or Superman-- just competent, interested, courteous, and, above all, willing to work and to learn.

How Can I Show That I Know My Job Well?

The answer is that you can't, at least not during the first few days or weeks on the job. You can only demonstrate job knowledge gradually as you move through three different stages. The first stage involves showing that you can adequately perform the tasks you said you could perform in the job interview. In effect, you are proving that your training and experience have prepared you. If you have presented yourself and your abilities accurately in the interview, you should have no real difficulty with this first stage of job knowledge. With a little nervousness taken into account, you can, in fact, perform the tasks you said you could at the level you indicated. In many positions, the supervisor can verify your compe-

tence at this first stage during your first few hours or days on the job. The more varied your duties, of course, the longer it will take you to demonstrate your competence in this first stage of job knowledge.

The second stage of job knowledge is concerned with how well you learn what can only be learned in this position with this particular company. The second stage really begins in the job interview when you gather information about job responsibilities and performance evaluations. In short, this stage involves determining exactly what your job duties are (including what, if any, decision-making powers you have), what the lines of communication and authority are, and what company policies and procedures are for employees in general and for the services or products of your particular department or division. Depending on the size of the organization and the level of your position, this second stage may require only a few weeks, or it may extend for nearly a year.

The hallmark of stage two is observing, listening, and asking questions. When you begin a new job, the assumption is that even if you have relevant training and experience, you do NOT know all there is to know about this particular position. You are expected to read and study any information given to you, to observe, to ask questions, and to listen carefully to the answers. If you do not understand an

answer, ask about whatever puzzles you and never say you understand when you don't. If you are tempted not to ask because you think others might consider you dumb, remind yourself that you are expected to ask questions now. You might also imagine how embarrassing it will be to have to ask that question months from now when others really do expect you to know the answer. If the company offers an orientation program, you should listen carefully and take notes. In addition, whenever a company provides you with an employee handbook or a policy and procedures manual, you should take it home and study it carefully. You do not want to waste someone else's time by asking questions which have been answered in writing and given to you. That's a quick way to be considered lazy. You may, of course, ask for clarification of important points in the manual or handbook. When you are asked to train a new employee and can answer all of his or her relevant questions about the job and the organization, you will know that you have achieved excellence in the second stage of job knowledge.

The third stage of job knowledge concerns keeping yourself informed of new developments in your field. It is a stage that many employees ignore, but it is an extremely important one. Be among the few who are

keeping up with the theories, procedures, equipment, and materials used in your field. To do this, you will probably need to invest some of your own time. Attend workshops, seminars, and trade or professional meetings whenever you possibly can. Take advantage of special training programs your company offers. Even though the company may not require you to attend in-service programs, you can be relatively certain that employees who do choose to attend will be labeled "interested in growth and advancement" or "open to change, flexible" or even "outstanding employee". Companies do not offer special training of any kind just to spend money.

There are other ways of keeping up-to-date in your field. One is to enroll in courses offered through colleges and businesses. Another is to subscribe to the magazines or journals of your occupation and read them regularly. In some fields, "shopping the competition" or visiting special exhibits can be an effective way of remaining current. Whatever means you use to stay informed of various developments in your field, your employer will realize that you have invested at least some of your own time to accomplish the feat. That is why achievement in this third stage of job knowledge can set you apart from co-workers and can be a major factor in your

success, recognition, and/or promotion. It is also the stage of job knowledge that should continue until you decide to change occupations.

How Can I Establish Effective Relationships With Co-Workers?

There is no easy answer to this question because human beings, and the relationships they develop with one another, are very complex. Throughout your co-op seminar this semester, you will be discussing various kinds of work relationships and some of the problems which can arise. Such discussion of specific situations provides the best means of understanding and solving problems in human relations. However, from this reading, you can get a few suggestions for avoiding some of the problems that commonly develop when a new employee tries to establish effective relationships with co-workers.

Throughout your life you have been developing tactics that enable you to meet strangers and, when you wish, form relationships as acquaintances or even friends. These tactics will prove useful in establishing good relations with co-workers. However, forming effective relationships in a new work setting requires special skill. In some ways, it is like trying to establish relationships with your spouse's family. Whether you are joining a new family

or a new company, you are entering a network of already established relationships. As a result, your task is more difficult than forming a friendship or acquaintanceship with one other person.

Your own expectations upon entering the new work situation will affect your ability to develop effective relationships with co-workers. If you walk into a new job setting with these four expectations, you are more likely to succeed:

1. Expect the general atmosphere and the manner in which employees relate to one another to be different from previous places you have worked.
2. Expect the priorities of doing business as well as some specific procedures to be different from previous places you have worked.
3. Expect hostility from some of your co-workers, but do not take it personally (anybody hired for this job would get the same initial reaction).
4. Expect some co-workers to be overly friendly, but do not take this personally either.

Notice that DIFFERENT is the key word in the first two expectations. You should not assume that the patterns of employee relationships in the new firm will be better or friendlier or more formal or identical to what you are used to.

The most accurate assumption you can make is that the atmosphere and relationships will be different from other places you have worked. Your first task for establishing effective relationships is to observe your new co-workers, listen to their comments

to each other, and take your cues from them. This suggestion of listening and observing is very important even if the interviewer or someone you know has already described the work atmosphere to you. Remember that what someone else considers "friendly" or "business-like" or "relaxed and informal" may not match your own conceptions.

Just as you must be open-minded about the atmosphere created by the employees' interactions, so you must be flexible about the procedures and priorities. Do not assume that the methods your previous employer used will be either preferred or accepted in your new job. Observe how others perform their tasks and listen carefully to the directions you are given. Do not begin by explaining the procedures of your previous employers to co-workers or by pointing out "the right method" you learned in some course. If you are uncertain of the method or order to be used, ask "Can you tell me how you want this done?" or "Is there any special method you would like me to use?" If you are not certain of the priorities, ask about them as well because one firm may value quantity of production above everything else and another might value accuracy. Do not begin by suggesting improvements for procedures. The time to make such comments is AFTER you have established effective relationships with other employees and have demonstrated your abil-

ity to do a good job. When you have accomplished these two feats, others are much more likely to listen to your comments and suggestions; in fact, they may even ask for your ideas and advice.

If your new job involves working with several people, you will probably encounter hostility from at least one or two. It is very important to expect some hostility during the first few days on a job. However, it is equally important that you realize such hostility is not personal: anyone hired for that job would be treated coldly. The reasons for this hostility vary widely. Some people simply do not like change and resist the idea of having to adjust to a "new person". Others resent the time it takes to train a newcomer. Even those not directly involved in your training may be resentful because, until you have learned all the details of the job, they are required to do more than their usual share of the work. Someone else may resent you because you were hired for the position and he or she had applied for it or a close friend or family member had applied. If your training is recent or if the person who hired you has praised your qualifications, some of your co-workers may feel threatened. Whatever the reason for the hostility, it can be diffused rather quickly if your own attitude is good. If you

approach the position with an attitude of "I'm here to learn how this job is to be done, so I can pull my own weight", you will overcome most hostility. If you approach the job with an attitude of "I know best" or "I am wonderful", you will quickly increase whatever hostility already existed.

If you have many new co-workers, you can also expect a few to be overly friendly. Although your first impulse might be to welcome that friendliness, you need to be cautious. Almost every organization has a few employees who have "causes" to promote. These causes might be personal (a strong religious or political viewpoint) or work-related ("pro" or "anti" a particular worker or supervisor or procedure). Whatever the cause, such employees usually pounce on newcomers because they hope to gain allies. During the first few weeks on the job, remind yourself that very friendly behavior, like hostile behavior, is probably impersonal: anyone hired for the position would have received the same welcome. Even though you may want a "job buddy", avoid aligning yourself with any one co-worker. Be especially wary of those who are eager to "fill you in" on your co-workers and supervisors. Instead, observe and draw your own conclusions. If you allow yourself to be aligned with those who are most friendly, you may

find yourself in the middle of an undesirable situation. Remember, the overly friendly ones are probably pouncing on you because they need allies--**few** share their viewpoint. Yet, if you respond favorably, the majority of co-workers may have you **labeled** as "just another X" before you even know what the label means.

Obviously, developing effective relationships with co-workers can be tricky. The key is to remember that you are entering an established network of relationships that will be different from what you are accustomed to. So, remain **open-minded** and flexible as you observe and listen to your new co-workers. Be prepared for some reactions to you as "the new employee" rather than as an individual. Mentally place yourself in the others' positions. Then you will be better able to understand and accept their reactions as part of their adjustment to the changes your presence is creating in the established network. Above all, remember that your purpose as **a** newcomer is to develop a good working relationship with others. Establishing effective relationships does NOT mean trying to win a popularity contest with co-workers or supervisors. It simply means being seen as an employee who will do what is expected in the manner expected. When you begin a new job, your goal is to be seen as part of the group (or just one of the neighborhood kids) instead of as "the new employee"

(or "the new kid on the block"). If you decide to try for a promotion after you have been with the firm for a while, then is the appropriate time to set yourself apart from your co-workers.

What Are The Good Work Habits I Should Display?

If you have had much work experience, you can probably list several desirable work habits by thinking of the people you have most enjoyed working with. The fact is that the best co-workers have good work habits. Although the most important and basic good work habits are difficult to follow faithfully, they are very easy to identify. Here are seven important work habits:

1. Assume responsibility for your own actions
2. Plan and/or schedule your work carefully
3. Show initiative
4. Remain flexible
5. Be conscientious
6. Be honest and fair in dealing with others
7. Evaluate your own performance periodically

Because different positions require different kinds of responsibilities, you will have to think about the specific ways you can demonstrate these habits in your own job. However, some discussion of these habits may stimulate your thinking and help you move from the broad, idealistic sound of the list to

everyday suggestions.

The first habit of assuming responsibility for your own actions is probably the most difficult. It includes everything from understanding the possible effects or consequences of acts (arriving late, submitting an incorrect report, forgetting to order materials, etc.) to accepting criticism. Being able to "own up to" your own mistakes and oversights without blaming others and without blaming circumstances (i.e. "but you know how rushed we were that day") is not easy. Every employee in every position has general responsibilities as an employee and specific responsibilities associated with the particular job. Learning to be accountable, to accept the blame as well as the praise, for the way those responsibilities are fulfilled is important. Perhaps the most difficult part of this is realizing that you can be penalized (or even terminated) for an error or oversight that caused no real damage. For example, if your job involves use or maintenance of special equipment and you forget to put it away properly, you are responsible and can be fired even if the worst consequence (perhaps the theft of the item or a co-worker's accident) did not occur. If you really grasp the idea of assuming responsibility for your actions, such a policy will seem reasonable to you.

The second habit, carefully planning and scheduling your work, is not such a difficult habit to develop. In some jobs there are few opportunities to plan or schedule work because the supervisor does this for you. But in almost every job there are some areas in which you have control. You may be able to plan how you perform a task instead of when--will you begin by counting the coins first or the bills first? If you were closing a cash register after a full shift, you might begin with what is most difficult for you because you know that the later it gets, the harder it will be to concentrate. On the other hand, if you know that your concentration improves as you count out the register, you might begin with whatever is easiest or least important. When you plan how you want to approach a task or schedule a time for working on a particular job duty, take your own "body schedule" into account as much as possible. Your energy level will vary throughout your work hours, so you need to determine when you have energy highs and lows; use the low energy periods for routine tasks. If an important task is scheduled by someone else for one of your "low" times, have a snack to give yourself an energy boost. Your overall concern in planning your work should be to improve your own efficiency and productivity.

The next two habits, showing initiative and remaining flexible, are closely related. When you like your job and co-workers, these habits are easy to develop. You show your initiative every time you begin a task without waiting to be told. If you have finished your work and you don't see work to do that you have ever done before, ask your supervisor if there is anything you can do. During your first few days on the job, you should keep checking with your supervisor. It is very easy to overstep your bounds when you are new on a job, so be a bit cautious about taking the initiative and never make decisions unless you are certain you have the authority to do so. As you learn the job, you will find more opportunities to display initiative. Often, your initiative will make your co-workers' work easier. That is why your attitude toward your co-workers will probably affect how much you develop the habit of showing initiative.

In addition to asking for more work as soon as you complete a task, you can show your initiative by developing more efficient ways to do your work. For instance, if your job involves remembering details, you can create a system of mental associations that will enable you to remember more easily. Or, you can demonstrate initiative by studying. For example, you might ask to take home records or catalogues or lists of supplies or descriptions of equipment so

that you can learn the ins and outs of your job more quickly. Throughout your work life, you can demonstrate initiative by taking advantage of special training courses and seminars. All types of independent study (review the end of chapter two) provide effective ways of showing your interest in your chosen field and your willingness to work.

If you develop your initiative, you are likely to remain flexible. When your own work is done and you volunteer to help a co-worker, you are proving that you are not bound by rigid rules. You realize that circumstances change daily and that even though the work may have been evenly divided when the day began, the events of the day altered that. Similarly, if you keep yourself informed of developments in your field, you will remain flexible. You will want to be experimenting with new methods instead of fighting change. If you have ever worked with inflexible people, those who cannot or will not adapt to changes in the work environment, you should be able to understand why employers value flexibility so highly. In almost every organization, changes occur daily. The volume of business can fluctuate, and the number of employees present to conduct that business can vary. No supervisor or firm can anticipate all the possibilities and cover them. So, employers

must depend, to some extent, on having flexible employees who are able to "read" the circumstances of the day, take initiative, and perform the most important tasks.

Being conscientious is another important work habit. If the quality of your work is poor, none of the other good work habits is likely to enable you to keep your job. You must develop the habit of being thorough. In essence, the quality of work you produce should be the same whether you are being carefully supervised or not. Doublecheck yourself-- don't wait for someone else to find your errors. If there are safety regulations in your work, follow them very carefully. Your work affects others just as the work of others can affect you. So never take shortcuts that could cause problems or bring danger to anyone--co-workers, the consumer who will be using the product or entering your place of business, or the middlemen who package, transport, and sell products. No matter what your position is, it has implications for others, some of whom you know and some you don't. So, be responsible. Do what you say you will do and be thorough. If you are unable to complete a task AND be thorough, admit that. Don't wait for another employee to discover and report your incomplete or sloppy work.

The habit of being honest and fair in dealing with others is directly related to being conscientious. If you are conscientious about your own work, you are being fair to others. If you are not conscientious about your work, you are being unfair to your co-workers and to others who must deal with the work you produce. When any employee does not perform his or her duties well, someone else must make up that "slack" by doing more than his or her own share or by re-doing what has been done poorly. The co-worker who is placed in the position of "taking up that slack" has been treated unfairly by the worker who did not perform his or her own duties or performed them badly. Obviously, the first good work habit discussed, assuming responsibility for your own actions, also relates to the habit of being honest and fair with others. If you admit your mistakes, you are assuming responsibility for your actions and being conscientious, honest, and fair. In fact, each of the good work habits discussed is based on the assumption that you want to treat others well. As a result, if you practice the first five good work habits, you will be fulfilling the sixth.

The seventh good work habit is the easiest because, unlike the others, it does not have to be practiced every day. Good employees evaluate their own

work performance at regular intervals. When you begin a new job, you should schedule frequent evaluations for yourself. In each of these self-evaluation sessions, consider the three areas we have been discussing in this chapter: (1) how well am I acquiring job knowledge; (2) how effective are my relationships with co-workers; and (3) what am I doing to display each important work habit. In each area, you should identify what you are doing well and what you most need to improve. When you identify areas for improvement, you will need to determine what exactly you can do to improve. You might want to review the last section of chapter one to make an action plan for your own improvement. The two warnings there are just as important in this context: do not expect perfection from yourself and concentrate on one problem at a time.

Begin by evaluating your progress in your new job each week. After a month, you might want to schedule your self-evaluations for every two weeks. By the end of the first three months, you should only need to review your performance monthly. No matter how long you remain in any given position, you should give yourself a performance review more often than your supervisor does. If you cannot uncover any area for improvement, you need to return to the beginning

of chapter one--either you have mastered the job and it bores you (there's nothing you want to learn about it) or you are not being thorough enough or objective enough in looking at your performance.

As you evaluate your own performance and try to adjust to your new position, remember that your co-op instructor is willing to discuss on-the-job problems and questions. Take advantage of the opportunity while you have it. It is another part of your chance to improve your position and advance.

APPENDIX A
EXAMPLES OF SELF INVENTORIES

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE 1

INTEREST INVENTORY

INTEREST INVENTORY

First, list your activities and interests in the left column. Second, use the middle and right columns to note what about each activity especially interests (or interested) you and why. When you are listing the "what's" and "why's", do not be bound by "should's". You may find it more practical to use separate sheets of paper for this exercise.

List of Interests	What about this interests (interested) me?	Why does (did) it interest me?
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HOBBIES

Present:

Past:

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

AND

RESPONSIBILITIES

Present:

Past:

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Present:

Past:

Interest Inventory
Continued

List of Interests	What about this interests (interested) me?	Why does (did) it interest me?
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JOB
RESPONSIBILITIES
Present:

Past:

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
Present:

Past:

CIVIC OR CHURCH
ACTIVITIES:
Present:

Past:

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE 2
CURRENT SKILLS INVENTORY

CURRENT SKILLS INVENTORY

Name the activities that are most important to you in each area of your life. Then, for each activity, list the skills required to perform or complete the activity. Finally, indicate your competence with each skill by numbering each from one (low) to five (high).

	ACTIVITY	SKILLS REQUIRED	LEVEL OF COMPETENCE
Example:	driving	physical coordination	5
		judging speed and distance	4

Work:

Family:

School:

Leisure
Activities:

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE 3

WORK VALUES INVENTORY

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WORK VALUES INVENTORY

Yes or Very Important	Somewhat Important	No or Not Important	I. Place a check in the box that most nearly represents your attitude toward each item listed.
			Category 1: Security of Position Is it important that it provide work all year round? Is it important that a position is likely to be long term with the same company? Is it important that the occupation itself be secure (position outlook not diminishing)? Category 2: Independence in Performing Duties Is it important that you be supervised closely? Is it important that you work alone most of the time? Is it important that your work hours be flexible from day to day? from week to week? from month to month? Is it important that your work hours remain the same? Category 3: Prestige of the Position Have prestige within the work setting Have prestige in the eyes of your family and friends Have prestige in society in general Category 4: Variety of Duties Have varied duties within a work day Have varied duties within a work week Have varied duties within a six-month period

Yes or Very Important	Somewhat Important	No or Not Important	
			Category 5: Work Environment or Atmosphere Circle the appropriate word or phrase and then place a check to indicate the importance of the circled item. Atmosphere: Formal/Informal Size: Small (10 employees or fewer on site)/Medium/Large (over 100 on site) Primary place: Indoors/Outdoors/Combination Risk factor: No physical danger/Element of danger Payment method: Straight salary/Salary plus commission/ Straight commission Category 6: Benefits Good medical insurance Good life insurance Dental insurance Disability insurance Strong retirement plan Educational program or assistance available Profit sharing plan Category 7: Opportunities of the Position For advancement with same company For advancement in the career field For decision making For problem solving For travel within city or county

Yes or Very Important	Somewhat Important	No or Not Important	
			Category 7: Opportunities of the Position For travel within state or region. For travel nationally or internationally. For learning on the job. For regular social interaction with a few. For regular social interaction with many. II. Now review those that you have checked as "Yes" or "Very Important". Rank each of those checked in the left column as either (1) for "critical" or (2) for "very desirable" or (3) for "desirable". Place these numbers to the right of the important items. III. List here the items you have marked as (1) for "critical". If you have more than seven items, try the exercise again.

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF COVER LETTERS AND RESUMES

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE 1

APPLICANT: CECILIA HAMRA
PROFILE: YOUNG
B.A. RELATED TO POSITION SOUGHT
LIMITED EXPERIENCE
SEEKING FIRST FULL TIME POSITION
COVER LETTER: LETTER OF INQUIRY
RESUME: CHRONOLOGICAL

8117 Avenue D, Apt. 112
Denton, Texas 76007
October 29, 1980

Ms. Myrna Greenberg
Vice President of Sales and Marketing
Parker Fashions
12067 Midway Road
Dallas, Texas 75234

Dear Ms. Greenberg:

Do you need a young designer who can produce lines that will appeal to women who are both style conscious and cost conscious? If so, my experience and portfolio may interest you. Because Parker Fashions produces moderately-priced lines for reputable chains such as J.C. Penney, I am especially interested in your firm. My resume, enclosed, highlights my accomplishments.

My portfolio reflects the talent and experience I can bring to Parker Fashions:

- * It demonstrates the range of my design ability by including samples of my work during the past four years, from elaborate Renaissance costumes to strikingly simple and functional sportswear.
- * It provides an in-depth look at the three award winning designs prepared for local style shows and my ability to cost these items and modify each slightly for different economic markets.
- * It reflects my ability to produce the quantity of designs the industry demands by including four proposed lines, each complete and each with notes about cost, color, and possible modifications.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you, present my portfolio, and discuss any suitable openings in your women's sportswear department. I will call you next week to discuss the possibility of our meeting on Friday, November 13th or Friday, November 27th.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Cecilia Hamra

Cecilia Hamra

Cecilia Hamra

Permanent Residence:
400 White Horse Road
Grand Prairie, Texas 75078
Ph. (214) 804-6699

Current Residence:
8117 Avenue D, Apt. 112
Denton, Texas 76007
Ph. (817) 267-5010

JOB OBJECTIVE: Fashion Designer, Beginner

EDUCATION

B.A. North Texas State University, Denton, expected December 1980. My degree plan has included course work in textiles, fashion design (3 semesters), advanced drawing, marketing, and advanced math.

A.A. El Centro College, Dallas, August 1978. My course work included all the requirements for the Apparel Design Program.

Diploma Ryan High School, 1976. My electives included drawing, chemistry, commercial design, and sewing.

EXPERIENCE

Designer Assistant, in Sportswear Chain Division, Jaro-Juniors, Dallas, holidays and summers of 1978, 1979, and 1980.

Duties: Assisted designer in cutting patterns, preparing muslin fittings, selecting fabrics for specific designs, and presenting samples to supervisor. Worked with natural and synthetic fabrics.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Dean's Honor List, December 1977-present
Chosen "Most Likely to Succeed" by Denton Chapter of Alpha Gamma Mu, 1980
Voted "Miss Rotary Talent" by the Grand Prairie Rotary Club, 1977.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Costume Designer, Denton Drama Group, 1979-1980. Selected and designed costumes for six major productions: one Renaissance, one Victorian, one western American, two contemporary, and one futuristic science fiction.

Studied piano and voice, private instruction for ten years.

OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Use fashion industry techniques to design and make all my own clothing as well as some apparel for family and friends
Can cost an apparel item

References and portfolio will be furnished on request.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE 2

APPLICANT: JOHN C. JAMES, JR.
PROFILE: MID THIRTIES
SOME COLLEGE WORK BUT LESS
THAN A. A.
CHANGING CAREERS
SUBSTANTIAL RELATED EXPERIENCE
BUT NO DIRECT EXPERIENCE
COVER LETTER: LETTER IN RESPONSE TO MAGAZINE AD
RESUME: FUNCTIONAL

1414 Carmel Road
Arlington, Texas 75304
October 8, 1980

Mr. David Black, Director
Software Development Division
Micromagic Systems
4172 Camp Wisdom Road
Houston, Texas 76024

Dear Mr. Black:

I am enclosing my resume in response to your ad for a programmer in the October issue of On Micro-Computing. Because Micromagic Systems is dedicated to developing software for small businesses with microcomputers and because the General Ledger, Accounts Payable, and Accounts Receivable programs you recently released are of such high quality, I am particularly interested in being affiliated with your firm.

My background and experience have provided me with an unusual perspective. I have worked demonstrating and selling various microcomputers and much software as well as developing and modifying programs to meet the needs of small businesses. In addition, I have been a user both managing a store with a micro system and working as a data processor. As a result of these experiences, I am well aware of the needs of small businesses and of their operators. Because I have worked as a user and with users, the programs I develop have complete documentation, are easy to use, and can be readily modified. Finally, my years of experience in electronics provide me with another special advantage as a programmer: I can distinguish between the limitations of the hardware and those of the software.

With my unique background and my commitment to business applications for microcomputers, I feel I can make valuable contributions in your growing department. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss my application with you and present some of the programs I have developed. I will call you next week to ask about a convenient time and date for an interview.

Thank you for considering me for this position.

Yours truly,

John C. James

John C. James

John C. James, Jr.
1414 Carmel Road, Arlington, Texas 75304
Bus: (214) 235-0001 Res: (817) 690-9944

POSITION SOUGHT: Computer Programmer developing and modifying small business software in BASIC, FORTRAN, or COBOL for microcomputers

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Familiar With Numerous Microcomputers and the Needs of the Small-Business Market

Experience: Manager of Byte Shop in Richardson, Texas (November 1978 - present); order, demonstrate and sell fifteen of the more popular microcomputers; supervise repair of units sold; order, demonstrate, and sell software books, tapes, and disks for various operating systems in different languages; assist users in modifying software to meet particular needs; contract with customers to develop software to meet particular needs including a text editor in BASIC, an accounts receivable program in COBOL, and several programs (such as beam analysis) in FORTRAN for a small architecture firm; have owned a TRS-80 Model I, Level II for three years and created numerous programs (business and entertainment) for it, using BASIC and FORTRAN.

Training: Attended two week training seminars in COBOL at Microcomputer Institute, Chicago, Illinois, March 1979, October 1979, February 1980, and September 1980.

Attended numerous one to three day training sessions conducted by microcomputer manufacturers such as Hewlett-Packard, Cromemco, and Texas Instruments.

Completed two courses in FORTRAN at Richland College, 1978.

Taught self BASIC, Levels I and II for TRSDOS and C-BASIC.

Familiar With the Needs of the Actual User, the Data Processor

Experience: Used Cromemco system in Byte Shop to handle all phases of business (cash registers, receipts, inventory control, letter and report writing, etc.).

Worked as data processor, Southwestern Aviation, Arlington, Texas (1970-1975); input engineering data.

Training: Completed six courses in Data Processing at El Centro College, 1969-1970.

John C. James, Jr.

Familiar With the Electronic Systems of Microcomputers

Experience: Worked as digital electronics technician for Romwise Corporation in Fort Worth, Texas (1975-1978); assisted with testing and refining Z-80 chips and testing new motherboard designs. Worked as electronics technician in Signal Corp of U.S. Army, 4th Division (1963-1969); repaired video components of radar and computer equipment.

Training: Completed three courses in Digital Electronics at Eastfield College, 1974-1975.

Completed various training programs in the U.S. Army, ranging from a six month initial training program to one and two day seminars.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE 3

APPLICANT: TERRY GREEN
PROFILE: MID TWENTIES
A. A. PLUS HOURS TOWARD B. A.
SEEKING TO ADVANCE WITHIN FIELD
OF SOME EXPERIENCE
COVER LETTER: LETTER OF INQUIRY
RESUME: COMBINATION

402 Bluebird Lane
Richardson, Texas 75080
July 28, 1980

Mr. Donald Stone
Accounting Department Manager
Newday, Inc.
1212 Gold Street
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Mr. Stone:

Do you need a young accountant who can take responsibility and produce results? If so, my experience and qualifications may interest you. The rapid growth of Newday, Inc. and its reputation for rewarding diligent and successful employees with increased responsibility interest me. My resume is enclosed in confidence.

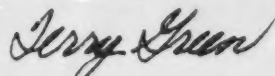
These are the things I can offer you:

- * The ability to establish or improve accounting procedures and to grasp the essential elements in your business
- * Experience in saving money through better analysis and sounder control of costs
- * The ability to discern how my chosen work can favorably affect your profit

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you and discuss any suitable opening in your accounting department. I am seeking a position as a junior accountant, either working on individual assignments or in a supervisory capacity. I will call you next week to ask about a convenient date for a meeting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Terry Green

Encl: Resume

TERRY GREEN

402 Bluebird Lane
Richardson, Texas 75080

Home Phone (214) 239-5432
Work Phone (214) 494-7865

POSITION OBJECTIVE: Junior Accountant with some opportunity to work with accounting associates or on special projects, especially in cost control and/or procedures analysis and design.

Education

A.A.S., Richland College, (Dallas, Texas), Accounting Associate Program, 1977.

Diploma, Bryan Adams High School, (Dallas, Texas), 1973.

In addition, I have completed 18 semester hours of accounting beyond the A.A.S. at the University of Texas at Dallas. These upper-level courses have included work in cost analysis, corporate payroll procedures, accounts receivable, audit procedures and analysis, and corporate income tax law.

Related Experience

1977-Present Accounting Associate, Marco Corporation, Richardson, Texas.

Regular Duties: Assist corporate C.P.A.'s with audits, financial statements, payroll procedures analysis, inventory control analysis, and reports.

Special Assignments: Analyzed the costs of employee insurance benefits, recommended instituting an employee assistance program, and designed procedures to control costs of that new program. Worked with outside consultant to study feasibility of instituting a computer payroll system using telecommunications for branch offices.

1976-1977 Accounting Associate Trainee, Cover-all Insurance Company, Dallas, Texas. Cooperative Education work experience in accounts receivable division, checking ledgers and daily computer printouts.

Work Habits

Dependable: I have only missed three days of work since April 1977.

Flexible: I enjoy the challenge of new assignments and am able to adjust readily to new demands and new routines.

Productive: My special assignment to analyze insurance costs and recommend alternatives resulted in a \$150,000 annual savings to the corporation; the innovative design of the employee assistance program also increased morale, according to a study undertaken by an outside consultant to evaluate the program.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE 4

APPLICANT: JESSIE M. GRANT

PROFILE: RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER
A.A.S. (JUST COMPLETING)
SEEKING FIRST FULL-TIME POSITION
IN NEW CAREER
SUBSTANTIAL OVERALL WORK EXPERIENCE
BUT LIMITED DIRECT EXPERIENCE

COVER LETTER: LETTER IN RESPONSE TO NEWSPAPER AD

RESUME: FUNCTIONAL

2410 East Main
Frisco, Texas 75267
July 18, 1980

Ms. Jane Crane
Regional Sales Supervisor
Medco Supply Company
912 Court Street
Chicago, Illinois 60606

Dear Ms. Crane:

Your July 16th ad in the Chicago Tribune described your need for a sales trainee willing to work in the field. I am very interested in this position as it is an excellent opportunity to begin my second career with a nationally known firm.

As part of my training at Brookhaven Community College, I am completing a Cooperative Education work experience with Chemco, Inc. of Dallas. In this part-time position, I have gained valuable experience in strengthening established relations with customers and developing new clients. My resume, enclosed, provides additional information about my background and qualifications. My experience, maturity, and desire to work in this field qualify me to successfully handle a position such as the one you have described.

I would appreciate a personal interview with you to discuss my application. I will be in Chicago August 4th through August 7th and would like to arrange a meeting during that time. I will call you early next week to ask about a convenient date and time. Because of the outstanding reputation of your firm, I am especially interested in discussing the possibility of working for you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Jessie M. Grant

Jessie M. Grant

Encl: Resume

RESUME: JESSIE M. GRANT
2410 East Main
Frisco, Texas 75267
Ph. (817) 473-2157

OBJECTIVE: A commissioned position selling medical and/or pharmaceutical supplies to hospitals, clinics, and doctors in a new rural district or one that needs development.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS: Recent successful experience in field sales. Broad knowledge of medical and pharmaceutical supplies. Extensive experience in dealing effectively with medical personnel. Thorough understanding of hospital purchasing and administrative procedures.

SALES EXPERIENCE: Jan. 1980 - present. Sales Representative for Chemco, Inc. of Dallas, a part-time position in the cooperative education program. Have taken routes for sales personnel on vacation (9 weeks) and won overall increased sales award four times and new clients award twice. Assisted District Sales Representative with district sales reports and attended weekly staff meetings.

HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE: 1966 - 1978. Assistant Director of Purchasing, promoted in 1972 to Director of Purchasing for the Medical Supply Division at Brooks Army Hospital. Coordinated purchases of all non-capital medical supplies for this major installation. Worked with medical team leaders and sales representatives to develop purchase orders and solve delivery and storage problems. Participated in the Association of Hospital Administrators (AHA) and conducted workshops for the AHA on effective purchasing procedures. Observed staff reactions to sales representatives to determine effective and ineffective sales techniques.

KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLIES: 1950 - 1966. Held various positions of increasing responsibility (from medic to distribution officer) that involved direct handling and storage of medical and pharmaceutical supplies. Worked with full range of products from small consumables (such as gauze and sutures) through gurneys and prosthetics to centrifuges and x-ray equipment.

PERSONAL QUALITIES:	Mature Organized	Energetic Responsible	Persuasive Meet People Easily
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EDUCATION: A.A.S., in Retail Distribution and Marketing, Brookhaven Community College, Dallas, Texas, expected August 1980.
Officers Training School, 1961.

APPENDIX C

NEGATIVE FACTORS IN JOB INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX C: NEGATIVE FACTORS IN JOB INTERVIEWS

Even if you have the qualifications needed for a position, you may not be offered the job. One reason may be that the interviewer reacted negatively to your appearance, behavior, and/or attitude during the interview. Although you cannot force the interviewer to react positively to you, you can increase your chances of being viewed as a desirable applicant by knowing and avoiding factors which are commonly considered negative.

FACTORS WHICH GENERALLY CREATE A NEGATIVE FIRST IMPRESSION:

late to interview

sloppy appearance (wrinkled or dirty clothes, dirty hands or fingernails, hair not washed or combed)

inappropriate clothing (either too formal or too informal)

noticeable odor (smoke, alcohol, body odor, perfume or aftershave, mouthwash)

poor posture

too much make-up and/or too much jewelry

FACTORS WHICH CREATE A NEGATIVE IMPRESSION OF YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS, COURTESY, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE:

mispronouncing, forgetting, and/or not using the interviewer's name

looking at the wall, floor, ceiling, etc. instead of looking interviewer in the eye

fidgeting (tapping feet or fingers, jiggling feet or legs, shifting position frequently, playing with jewelry, etc.)

smoking without asking if the interviewer minds

chewing gum

looking frequently at your watch

using only nods, grunts, or single words to answer questions

interrupting the interviewer

mumbling or speaking loudly

giving long, rambling responses that evade the question asked or provide more information than the question demanded

7
using nonstandard English (swearing, mispronouncing words,
using incorrect word forms such as "we was" or "he
don't," etc.)

chuckling or giggling before almost every answer

never smiling, responding to humor, or changing facial
expressions

not expressing appreciation for the interviewer's time

FACTORS WHICH CREATE A NEGATIVE IMPRESSION OF YOUR WORK HABITS
AND ATTITUDE:

blaming others (co-workers, supervisors, teachers, parents)
for shortcomings

complaining about previous jobs

only asking about money and benefits

not knowing anything about the company

name dropping (emphasizing who you know instead of what you
can do)

undervaluing education if you lack that or undervaluing
experience if you lack that

emphasizing what you are not willing to do (relocate, travel,
work overtime, etc.)

saying you will only work for a short time or only very
specific hours

indicating that others (parents, spouse, etc.) make decisions
for you

frequently answering indecisively with "I can't say," "I'm
not sure," "I don't know," or "I guess"

expressing prejudices based on race, religion, ethnic group,
age, sex, etc.

not including reasons in your answers

not being able to give specific examples that support the
positive remarks you make about yourself

promising too much and/or using high pressure tactics to
"sell yourself"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Books That Include Self Inventories

The Quick Job Hunting Map by Richard N. Bolles and the National Career Development Project. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1975.

Discovering You by Charles C. Healy and Charles S. Winn. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

Knowing Your Self by Will M. Kidwell and Vernon A. Wallace. Career Core Competencies Series. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977.

The Next Move: A Workbook in Career Planning by Carolyn R. Parker and Debra J. Levin. 2nd ed. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1979.

Work Experience Handbook by William H. Pivar. San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1976.

Making Decisions Work by Patrick J. Weagraff and James J. Lynn. Career Core Competencies Series. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977. See chapters two and three.

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Help Yourself by John M. Lembo. Niles, IL: Argus Communication, 1974.

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Media

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OVERVIEW: Guide to Career Awareness Skills by the Career Skills Assessment Program of the College Board, Experimental Edition, 1977. Two booklets, one provides exercises to check your grasp of the material and the other explains concepts.

Books That Provide Career-Planning Information

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A Guide to Career Education by Muriel Lederer. New York: Quadrangle, 1974. Describes 200 occupations that do not require college degrees.

Job Ideas for Today's Woman by Ruth Lembeck. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974.

What Can I Be? A Guide to 525 Liberal Arts and Business Careers by Leo Liberman. New York: Martin M. Bruce Publishers, 1976.

I Can Be Anything: Careers and Colleges for Young Women by Joyce Slayton Mitchell. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1975.

The National Guidance Handbook: A Guide to Vocational Education Programs. Chicago, IL: Science Research Associates, 1975.

Non-Traditional Careers for Women by Sara Splaver. New York: Julian Messner, 1973.

Media That Provides Information About Specific Careers

The Wonderful World of Work, a series of filmstrip-tapes, each discussing one of the following 24 occupations:

Real Estate Agents	Airline Flight Attendants
Radio/TV Announcers	Commercial Artists
Electrical Engineers	Social Workers
Architects	Veterinarians
Home Economists	Photographers
Interior Designers	Carpenters
Geologists	Physicians
Physicians' Assistants	Printers
Travel Agents	Plumbers
Commercial Pilots	Bankers
Lab Technicians	Hair Stylists
Firefighters	Barbers

Media

The Fascinating World of Work, a series of 42 filmstrip-tapes, each discussing a different occupation, by National Career Consultants of Dallas.

Careers in Fluid Power, a 12 minute, color, 16 mm. film.

Filmmaking Techniques: Overview of 8 mm. Production, a 17 minute, color, 16 mm. film.

Filmmaking Techniques: Editing, a 16 minute, color, 16 mm. film.

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Easy-Reading Books

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Job Interviews by McVey and Associates, Inc. Chicago: Follett, 1978.

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Get That Job: Line Up Your Interview, an 11 minute, color, 16 mm. film.

Job Interview: "I Guess I Got the Job", a 13 minute, color, 16 mm. film.

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Books

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"The First Few Days"
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"Too Much Talk"
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"The Magic Words That Get You Fired"
"Excuses"
"Supervisors Are Human Too"
"Money, Money, Money"
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"Stick Up for Your Rights"
"Promotions"
"Giving Notice"
"The Fast Exit"
"The Extra Work Assignment"
"Does The New Man Have to Get the Coffee?"
"Why Were You Late?; The Wrong File; Getting Fired"
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"Getting Along with People on the Job"
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